

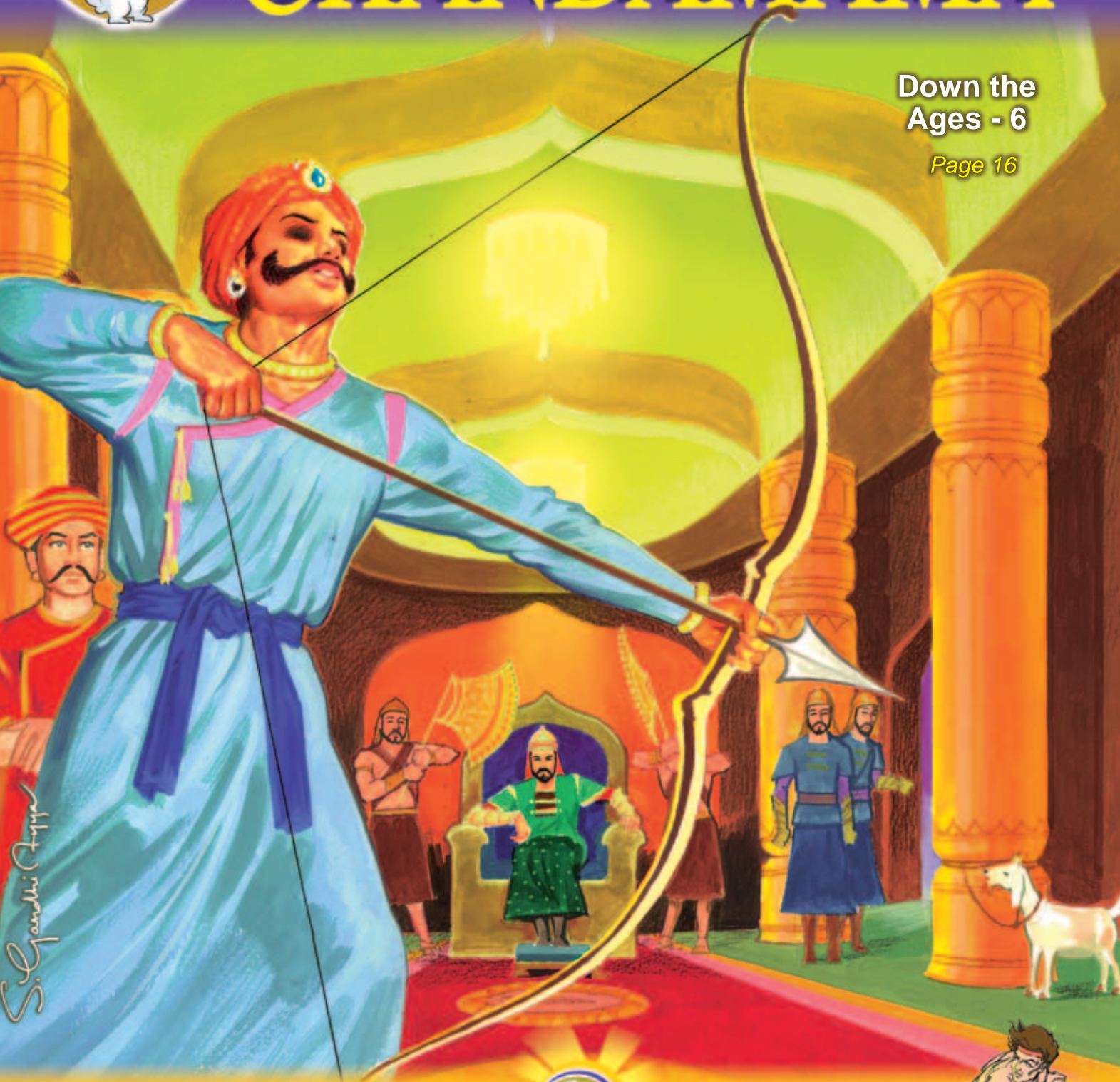


JUNE 2003 Rs. 15/-

# CHANDAMAMA

Down the  
Ages - 6

Page 16



S. Gandhi Pujar

STARTING NEW EXCITING COMICS



## ARYA

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of the  
Unknown  
Prince





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**20**  
**How a New Land**  
**Was Born**  
(A Maori legend)



**17**  
**A Pig Challenges a**  
**Tiger**  
(A folktale from  
Meghalaya)



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## Remembering the last great idealist

I'm sure you already know about your magazine's new venture, the *Junior Chandamama*, meant for your little brothers and sisters and others like them. I call it a venture. However, the truth is, it is an adventure - an adventure in ideas. The project was inspired by the need for placing some really meaningful material before the smaller age group - articles and pictures that would amuse them and also make them think - make them aware of the heritage of their motherland, through stories and queries. A team of dedicated minds are at work for giving a shape to this ideal.

Our inspiration in this direction got a delightful boost on the 10th of April when the first copy of the new publication was graciously received by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India. He was very happy with the new magazine and wished it the place it deserves in the life of the young. What deeply moved us was the emphasis he gave on the need for dreaming. We can expect a worthy future for our children only if they know how to dream and aspire, to think big and to have the courage and patience to make that dream, that vision, a reality.

Let us follow this sound and sane advice with the utmost sincerity.

We can be happy individually only if we can dream collectively - for a better and greater tomorrow.

Founded by  
B. Nagi Reddi  
Chakrapani

Editor  
Viswam

Editorial Advisors  
Ruskin Bond,  
Manoj Das  
Consultant Editor  
K.Ramakrishnan

### Words of Wisdom

If you think you are beaten, you are.  
If you think you dare not, you don't!  
If you want to win, but think you can't,  
It's almost a cinch you won't.  
  
If you think you'll lose, you're lost;  
For out in the world we find

### If you think

Success begins with a fellow's will;  
It's all in the state of the mind.  
  
Life's battles don't always go  
To the stronger and faster man,  
But sooner or later the man who wins  
Is the man who thinks he can.

*Walter D. Wintle*

Visit us at : <http://www.chandamama.org>



Enter the Heroes of India Quiz and win fabulous prizes

# Heroes of India - 21

India has a rich tradition of classical music. Here are some of our 'music' heroes. How many can you recognise?

Three  
all correct entries  
will receive bicycles  
as prizes.\*



1

Youngest of the trinity of Carnatic musicians, I was primarily a veena player. I used western tunes for Sanskrit songs. Who am I?

2

I composed songs in both Carnatic and Hindustani music. I was also the Maharaja of Travancore. Do you know me?

3

I am a celebrated Dhrupad singer. I was the royal composer at the court of Raja Man Singh Tomar of Gwalior. Do you know my name?

4

A bhakti poet (1484 – 1564), I have composed 475,000 devotional songs. Who am I?

5

I lived between 1424 and 1503, and have composed nearly 32,000 songs in praise of Lord Venkateswara of Tirupati. What is my name?

Fill in the blanks next to each question legibly. Which of these five is your favourite hero and why? Write 10 words on **My favourite music hero is**

Name of participant:.....

.....Age:.....Class:.....

Address:.....

Pin:.....Ph:.....

Signature of participant:.....

Signature of parent:.....

Please tear off this page and mail it to

**Heroes of India Quiz-21**

CHANDAMAMA INDIA LIMITED

No.82, Defence Officers' Colony

Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097.

On/before **July 5, 2003.**

## Instructions

1. The contest is open to children in the age group 8-14 years.
2. \*Three winners will be selected for this contest from entries in all the language editions. **Winners will receive bicycles of appropriate size.** If there are more than one all correct entries, winners will be selected on the basis of the best description of **My favourite hero.**
3. The judges' decision will be final.
4. No correspondence will be entertained in this regard.
5. The winners will be intimated by post.

Prizes brought  
to you by





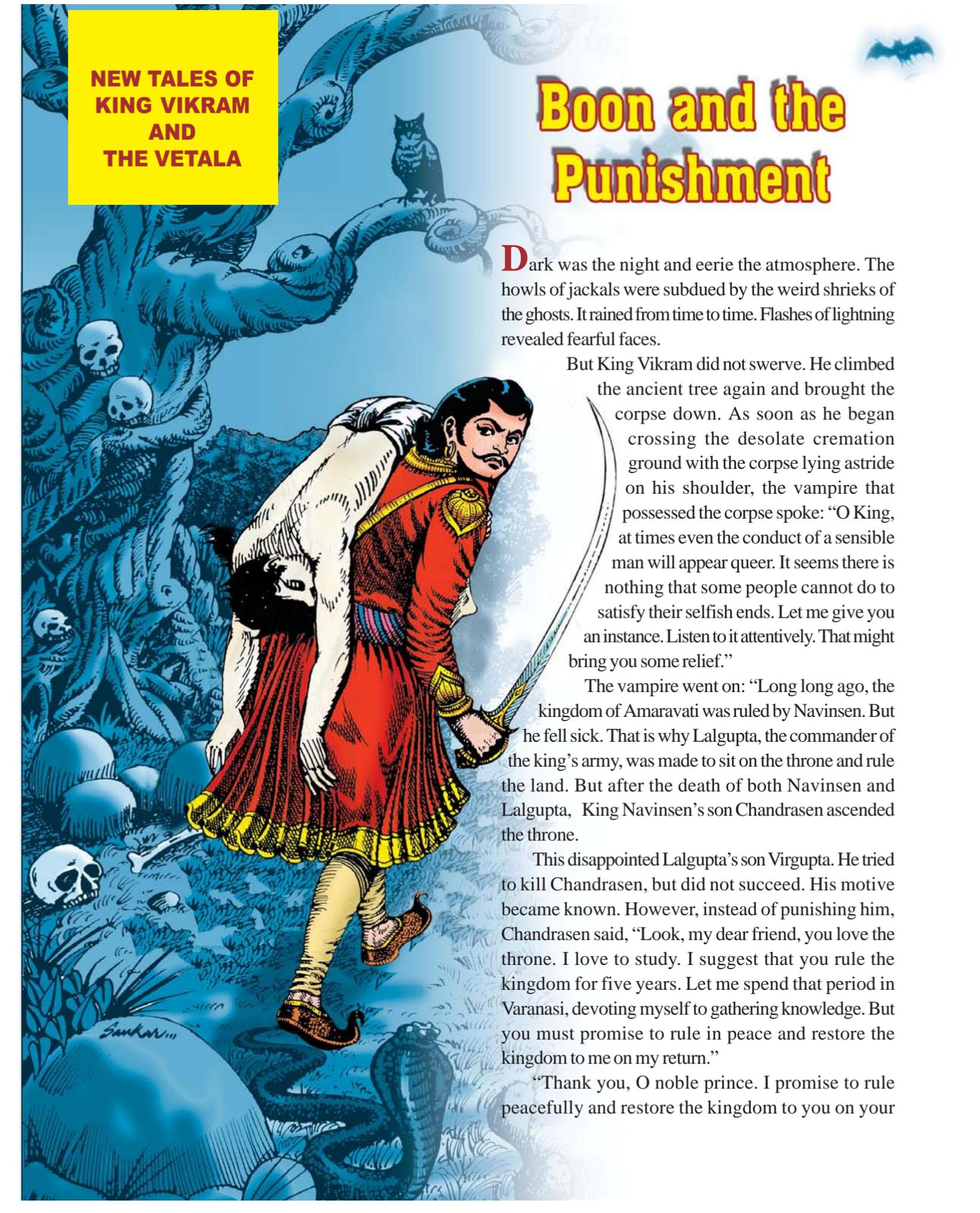
## FIRST COPY FOR FIRST CITIZEN



**A**pril 10, 2003, was a red-letter day for **Chandamama**, when the First Copy of the first issue of **Junior Chandamama** was presented to his Excellency, **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam**, President of India, who had endeared himself as a trusted friend of the children of India. He graciously accepted the copy from the publishers, who had called on him that evening. He was very appreciative of the publication and blessed the bold adventure, launched after providing healthy reading for children for 56 years.







**NEW TALES OF  
KING VIKRAM  
AND  
THE VETALA**

# Boon and the Punishment

**D**ark was the night and eerie the atmosphere. The howls of jackals were subdued by the weird shrieks of the ghosts. It rained from time to time. Flashes of lightning revealed fearful faces.

But King Vikram did not swerve. He climbed the ancient tree again and brought the corpse down. As soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, at times even the conduct of a sensible man will appear queer. It seems there is nothing that some people cannot do to satisfy their selfish ends. Let me give you an instance. Listen to it attentively. That might bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: "Long long ago, the kingdom of Amaravati was ruled by Navinsen. But he fell sick. That is why Lalgupta, the commander of the king's army, was made to sit on the throne and rule the land. But after the death of both Navinsen and Lalgupta, King Navinsen's son Chandrasen ascended the throne.

This disappointed Lalgupta's son Virgupta. He tried to kill Chandrasen, but did not succeed. His motive became known. However, instead of punishing him, Chandrasen said, "Look, my dear friend, you love the throne. I love to study. I suggest that you rule the kingdom for five years. Let me spend that period in Varanasi, devoting myself to gathering knowledge. But you must promise to rule in peace and restore the kingdom to me on my return."

"Thank you, O noble prince. I promise to rule peacefully and restore the kingdom to you on your



return,” said Virgupta. Chandrasen left for Varanasi. Virgupta became the king.

The king of Mohanpur had a daughter named Manimala. She was both beautiful and gifted. Her father arranged for her Swayamvara. Invitations were sent to a number of princes.

Unfortunately, Virgupta did not receive any invitation. He was annoyed. “Why has Mohanpur ignored me?” he asked his minister.

“My lord, the King of Mohanpur desires his daughter to be a queen. He knows very well that your tenure as king will last only a few more years. Why then should he invite you?” replied the minister.

“I shall teach him a lesson. Prepare our army. I

shall lead the march against Mohanpur,” said Virgupta angrily.

“My lord, please do not forget the fact that you have promised to rule peacefully,” reminded the minister.

But Virgupta paid no heed to the minister’s advice. He sent a messenger to the court of Mohanpur along with his picture and a message that he ought to be invited for the Swayamvara. Otherwise he would attack and destroy Mohanpur.

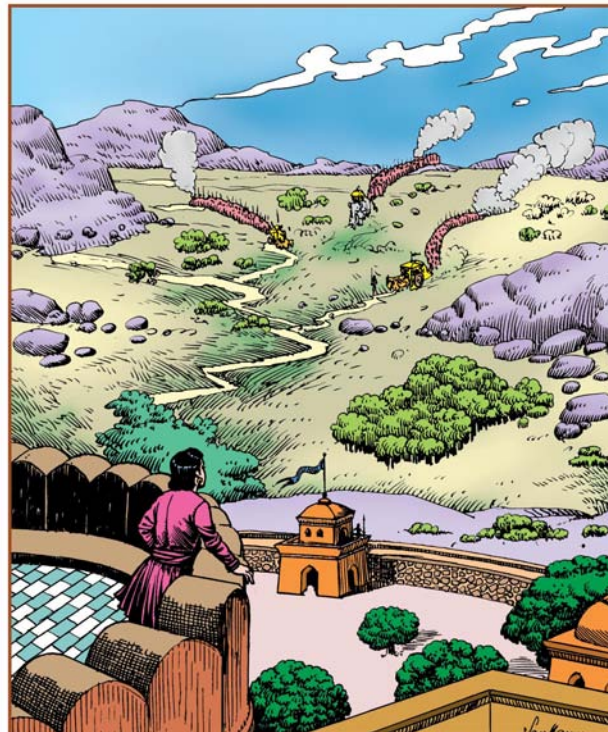
The King of Mohanpur flung Virgupta’s picture away and tore his letter to pieces. Virgupta’s emissary returned to his master, humiliated.

Virgupta declared war against Mohanpur.

The King of Mohanpur sent messengers to the princes who had been earlier invited by him, saying that the one who would behead Virgupta would marry Manimala.

Several princes headed towards Amaravati with their armies, each one eager to behead Virgupta.

Spies carried the news of the impending attack on Amaravati to Prince Chandrasen at Varanasi. He at once set out for Amaravati. He climbed to the top of the castle and observed how hordes of soldiers were heading towards his castle from different directions, led by various princes.



Virgupta too came up and had a view of the invading armies. He was trembling with fear.

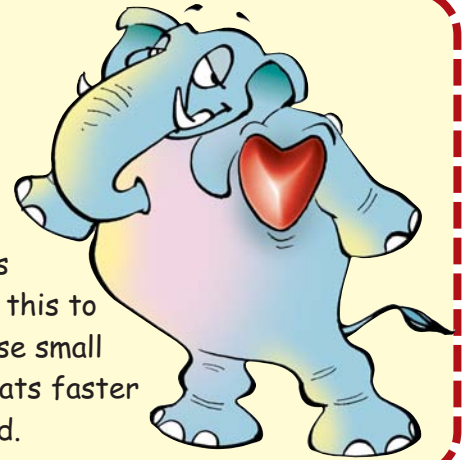
As soon as the invading princes reached the castle wall, Prince Chandrasen struck Virgupta with his sword. Virgupta’s head rolled down from the roof.

When the princes saw that Virgupta had already been beheaded by someone, they went away.

Chandrasen produced Virgupta’s head before the King of Mohanpur. Needless

## Beating hearts

Do you know how many times your heart beats in a minute? For an adult human it is 70 times per minute. Men's hearts beat at a slightly lower rate than women's, and those of older people beat more slowly than those of the young. As for the animal world, among the warm-blooded animals, the smaller ones show higher rates of heartbeats than the bigger ones. Compare this to an elephant's, which beats just 20 times a minute! This is because small animals use oxygen more quickly than larger ones. The heart beats faster to help supply the body tissues with more oxygen-carrying blood.



to say, he married Princess Manimala. The vampire paused and, in a challenging voice, demanded of King Vikram, "O King, was it not treacherous of Chandrasen to kill Virgupta? How could a man who had been so sympathetic towards Virgupta earlier, behave in such a manner? Had his desire to marry Manimala turned him mad? Answer me, O king, if you can. Should you keep mum though you may know the answer, your head would roll off your shoulders."

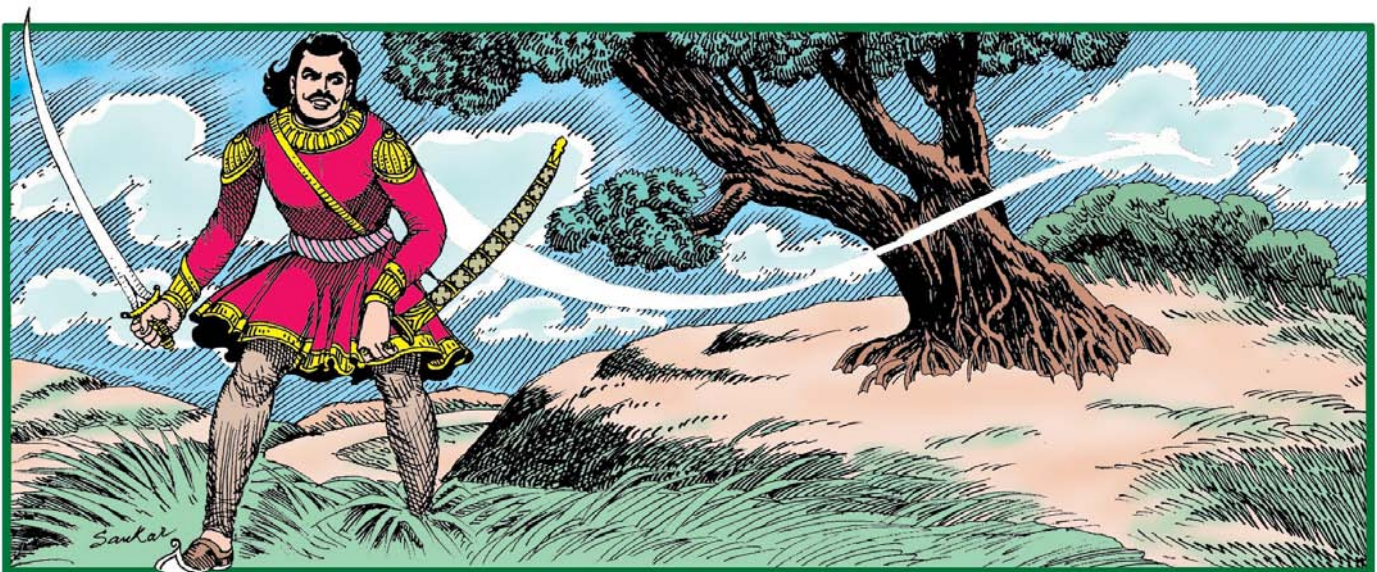
King Vikram answered forthwith: "Before we judge Chandrasen, we must judge Virgupta's conduct. The fact that Virgupta had once tried to kill Chandrasen must not be forgotten. Chandrasen had not only forgiven Virgupta, but granted him a rare privilege— kingship for five years!

"Virgupta had promised to rule peacefully. He broke

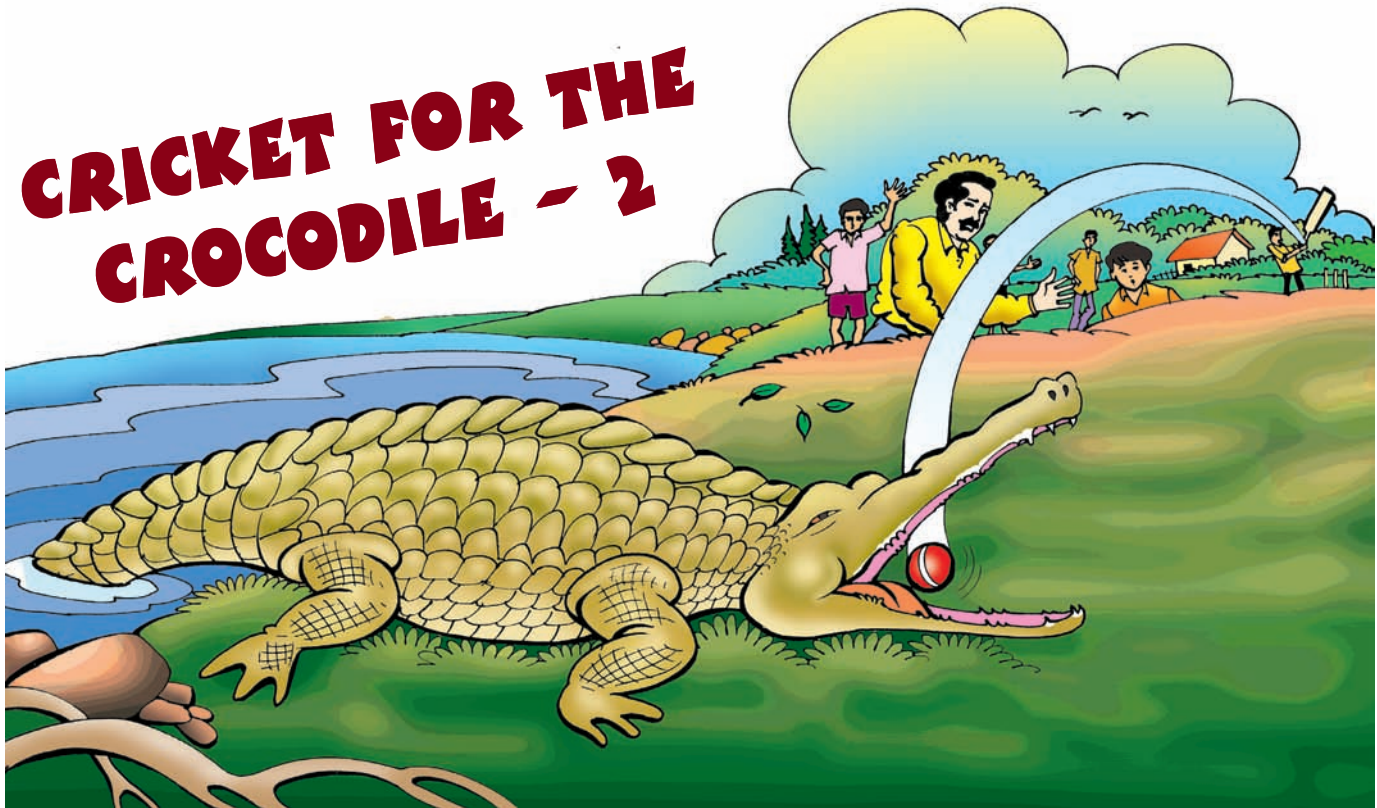
his promise when he declared war on Mohanpur. Since he insisted on marrying Princess Manimala, it was obvious that he had decided to cling to the throne.

"We see that Virgupta had always conducted himself treacherously. He deserved death right at the beginning when he tried to kill Chandrasen. If Chandrasen killed him at last, it was not due to any personal grievance, but to protect his kingdom. An attack by so many princes would have ruined Amaravati totally. Virgupta, in any case, would have lost his head to one of the princes. Chandrasen did only what any intelligent prince would have done in such a grave situation."

No sooner had the king finished replying than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip. King Vikram drew his sword and went after the vampire.



# CRICKET FOR THE CROCODILE - 2



*(Story so far : Ranji is the leader of his cricket team. He discussed with his team mates their next match with the village team which is quite strong. The team mates are the baker's son, the tailor's son, the post master's son, the bank manager's son—all from different areas of the town. Some of the fathers, too, are keen to join the team! Among the spectators is a crocodile which crawls to the river bank for a 'catch' which, of course, has nothing to do with cricket. The boys have named him Nakoo, meaning nosey. The villagers, however, respectfully call him Nakoo-ji. During the practice session, the ball falls into the river and the boys jump into the water to retrieve it. So many of them, and Nakoo is scared. On the day of the match, what do the boys see? Nakoo sprawled on the cricket pitch!)*

**T**he tall Delhi player came out to open the innings with little Mani.

Mani was a steady bat, who could stay at the wicket for a long time, but in a one-day match, quick scoring was needed. This the Delhi player provided. He struck a four, then took a single off the last ball of the over. It gave him the bat again and he took eight runs off the next over.

In the third over, Mani tried to hit out and was bowled for a duck. So the village team's score was 13 for 1.

"Well done," said Ranji to fast bowler Prem. "But we'll have to get that tall fellow out soon. He seems quite good." But the tall fellow showed no sign of getting out. He hit two more boundaries and then swung one hard and high towards the river.

Nakoo, who had been sulking in the shallow, saw

the ball coming towards him. He opened his jaws wide, and with a satisfying "clunk!" the ball lodged between his back teeth.

Nakoo got his teeth deep into the cricket ball and chewed. Revenge was sweet. And the ball tasted good, too. The combination of leather and cork was just right. Nakoo decided that he would snap up all the balls that came his way.

"Harmless old reptile," said the bank manager. He produced a new ball and insisted that he bowled with it.

It proved to be the most expensive over of the match. The bank manager's bowling was quite harmless and the Delhi player kept hitting the ball into the fields for fours and sixes. The score soon mounted to 40 for 1. The bank manager modestly took himself off.

By the time the tenth over had been bowled, the score had mounted to 70. Then Ranji, bowling slow spins, lost his grip on the ball and sent the batsman a full toss. Having played the good balls perfectly, the Delhi player could not resist taking a mighty swipe at the bad ball. He mistimed his shot, and was astonished to see the ball fall into the hands of a fielder near the boundary. 70 for 2. The game was far from being lost for Ranji's team.

A couple of wickets fell cheaply, and then Sheroo came in and started playing rather well. His drives were straight and clean. The ball cut down the buttercups and hummed over the grass. A big hit landed in a poultry yard. Feathers flew and so did curses. Nakoo raised his head to see what all the noise was about. No further cricket balls came his way, and he gazed balefully at a heron who was staying just out of his reach.

The score mounted steadily. The fielding grew slack, as it often does when batsmen gain the upper hand. A catch was dropped. And Nathu's father, keeping wicket, missed a stumping chance.

"No more grown-ups in our team," grumbled Nathu.

The baker made amends by taking a good catch behind the wicket. The score was 115 for 5, with about half the overs remaining.

Sheroo kept his end up, but the remaining batsmen struggled for runs and the end came with about 5 overs still to go. A modest total of 145.

"Should be easy," said Ranji.

"No problem," said Prem.

"Lunch first," said the bank manager, and they took a half-hour break.

The village boys went to their homes for rest and refreshment, while Ranji and his team spread themselves out under the banyan tree.

Nathu's father had brought patties and pakoras; the bank manager had brought a basket of oranges and bananas; Prem had brought jack-fruit curry; Ranji had brought *halwa* made from carrots, milk and sugar; Sunder had brought a large container full of savoury rice cooked with peas and fried onion; and the others had brought various curries, pickles and sauces. Everything was shared, and with the picnic in full swing no one noticed that Nakoo the crocodile had left

the river. Using some tall reeds as cover, he had crept half way up the river bank. Those delicious food smells had reached him too, and he was unwilling to be left out of the picnic. Perhaps the boys would leave something for him, if not...

"Time to start," announced the bank manager, getting up. "I'll open the batting. We need a good start if we are going to win."

★ ★ ★

The bank manager strode out to the wicket in the company of young Nathu. Sheroo opened the bowling for the village team.

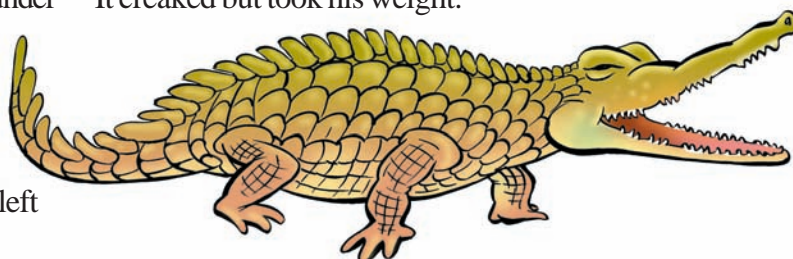
The bank manager took a run off the first ball. He puffed himself up and waved his bat in the air as though the match had already been won. Nathu played out the rest of the over without taking any chances.

The tall Delhi player took up the bowling from the other end. The bank manager tapped his bat impatiently, then raised it above his shoulders, ready to hit out. The bowler took a long fast run up to the bowling crease. He gave a little leap, his arm swung over, and the ball came at the bank manager in a swift, curving flight.

The bank manager still had his bat raised when the ball flew past him and uprooted his middle stump. A shout of joy went up from the fielders. The bank manager was on his way back to the shade of the banyan tree.

"A fly got into my eye," he muttered. "I wasn't ready. Flies everywhere!" And he swatted angrily at flies that no one else could see.

The villagers, hearing that someone as important as a bank manager was in their midst, decided that it would be wrong for him to sit on the ground like everyone else. So they brought him a cot from the village. It was one of these light wooden beds, taped with strands of thin rope. The bank manager lowered himself into it rather gingerly. It creaked but took his weight.



The score stood 1 for 1. Anil took his father's place at the wicket and scored ten runs in two overs. The bank manager pretended not to notice but he was really quite pleased. "Takes after me," he said, and made himself comfortable on the cot.

Nathu kept his end up while Anil scored the runs. Then Anil was out, skying a catch to mid-wicket.

25 for 2 in six overs. It could have been worse. "Well played!" called the bank manager to his son, and then lost interest in the proceedings. He was soon fast asleep on the cot. The flies did not seem to bother him any more.

Nathu kept going, and there were a couple of good partnerships for the fourth and fifth wickets. When the Delhi player finished his share of overs, the batsmen became more free in their stroke-play. Then little Mani got a ball to spin sharply, and Nathu was caught by the wicket-keeper.

It was 75 for 4 when Ranji came in to bat.

Before he could score a run, his partner at the other end was bowled. And then Nathu's father strode up to the wicket, determined to do better than the bank manager. In this he succeeded—by one run.

The baker scored two, and then in trying to run another two when there was only one to be had, found himself stranded halfway up the wicket. The wicket-keeper knocked his stumps down.

The boys were too polite to say anything. And as for the bank manager he was now fast asleep under the banyan tree.

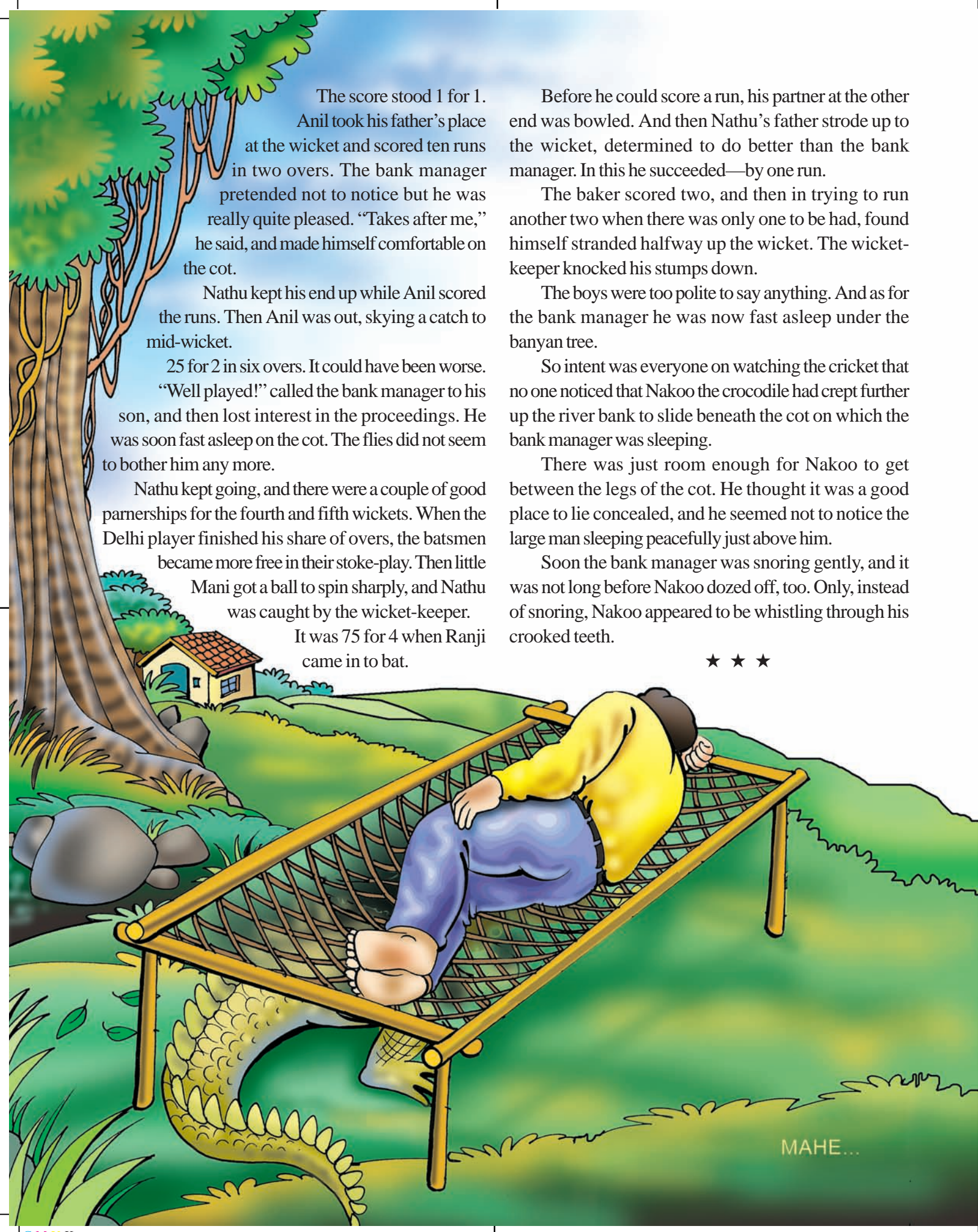
So intent was everyone on watching the cricket that no one noticed that Nakoo the crocodile had crept further up the river bank to slide beneath the cot on which the bank manager was sleeping.

There was just room enough for Nakoo to get between the legs of the cot. He thought it was a good place to lie concealed, and he seemed not to notice the large man sleeping peacefully just above him.

Soon the bank manager was snoring gently, and it was not long before Nakoo dozed off, too. Only, instead of snoring, Nakoo appeared to be whistling through his crooked teeth.

★ ★ ★

MAHE...



75 for 5 and it looked as though Ranji's team would soon be crashing to defeat.

Sunder joined Ranji and, to everyone's delight, played two lovely drives to the boundary. Then Ranji got into his stride and cut and drove the ball for successive fours. The score began to mount steadily—112 for 5. Once again there were visions of victory.

After Sunder was out, stumped, Ranji was joined by Prem, a big hitter. Runs came quickly. The score reached 140. Only six runs were needed for victory.

Ranji decided to do it in style. Receiving a half-volley, he drove the ball hard and high towards the banyan tree.

Thump! It struck Nakoo on the jaw and loosened one of his teeth.

It was the second time that day he'd been caught napping. He'd had enough of it.

Nakoo lunged forward, tail thrashing and jaws snapping. The cot, with the manager still on it, rose with him. Crocodile and cot were now jammed together, and when Nakoo rushed forward, he took the cot with him.

The bank manager, dreaming that he was at sea in a rowing boat, woke up to find the cot pitching violently from side to side.

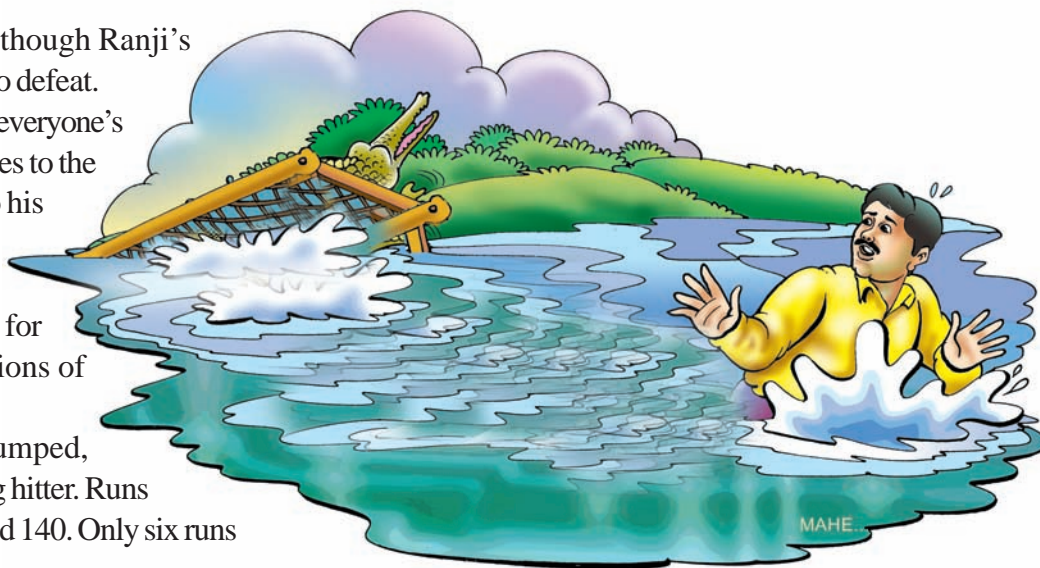
"Help!" he shouted. "Help!"

The boys scattered in all directions, for the crocodile was now advancing down the wicket, knocking over stumps and digging up the pitch. He found an abandoned sun hat and swallowed it. A wicket-keeper's glove went the same way. A batsman's pad was caught up on his tail.

All this time the bank manager hung on to the cot for dear life, as it rocked and plunged about with the crocodile's heavings. He wondered if he should try and jump to safety, but would he be able to get out of reach of Nakoo's jaws and tail? He decided to hand on to the cot until it was dislodged.

"Come on, boys, help!" he shouted. "Get me off!"

But the cot remained firmly attached to the crocodile, and so did the bank manager.



The problem was solved when Nakoo made for the river and plunged into its familiar waters. Then the bank manager tumbled into the water and scrambled up the river bank, while Nakoo made for the opposite shore.

The bank manager's ordeal was over, and so was the cricket match.

"Did you see how I dealt with that crocodile?" he said, still dripping, but in better humour now that he was safe again. "By the way, who won the match?"

"We don't know," said Ranji, as they trudged back to their bicycles. "That would have been a six if you hadn't been in the way."

Sheroo, who had accompanied them as far as the main road, offered a return match the following week.

"I'm busy next week," said the baker.

"I have another game," said the bank manager.

"What game is that, Sir?" asked Ranji.

"Chess," said the bank manager.

Ranji and his friends began making plans for the next match.

"You won't win without us," said the bank manager.

"Not a chance," said the baker.

But Ranji's team did, in fact, win the next match.

Nakoo the crocodile did not trouble them, because the cot was still attached to his back, and it took him several weeks to get it off.

A number of people came to the river bank to look at the crocodile who carried his own bed around.

Some even stayed to watch the cricket. (*Concluded*)



*Mubammed Ghorī sat on the throne eager to see his captive, Prithviraj, now blinded, shoot an arrow merely guided by sound. The goat bleated, the arrow flew. And then?*

## The arrow found its target

**P**rithviraj Chauhan was the last Hindu ruler of Delhi. His fame had spread far and wide. One man who had an eye on India was Muhammed of Ghor, in Afghanistan. He invaded India and reached Delhi, but his army was routed and he was taken prisoner. When he was brought before Prithviraj, he treated the invader with courtesy and freed him.

Ghori came a second time with a bigger army and was again defeated.

Prithviraj admonished him and set him free. Ghori lay low for some years and later invaded India a third time. He was again defeated, but Prithviraj released him.

Some of his ministers and advisers protested and said Ghori should not have been spared. But Prithviraj said he would not kill anybody in cold blood.

When Muhammed came a fourth time, he was aware of the dissensions in Prithviraj's court. In the battle that followed, Prithviraj was defeated and taken prisoner. Muhammed ascended the throne of Delhi as Sultan and ordered the execution of all prisoners except Prithviraj and the court poet, Chand Bardai. But Prithviraj was



blinded. One day, the Sultan was listening to Chand Bardai's poetry in which he praised Prithviraj, mentioning his ability to hit a target merely guided by the direction of the sound. He asked the poet whether he could persuade Prithviraj to exhibit his skill.

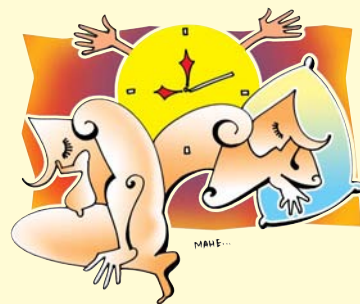
Reluctant at first, Prithviraj agreed, especially after Chand Bardai told him they could even carry out a plan to kill Ghori.

The Sultan sat on his throne, while Prithviraj stood a little away ready to shoot an arrow. Ghori had arranged for a goat to be tied far away from the throne. Prithviraj was expected to shoot at the goat when he heard its bleating. But he was all the while only listening to the Sultan giving various instructions and mentally fixing the direction of his voice.

Chand Bardai recited his poem in praise of Prithviraj which concluded by saying the Sultan was about to witness an uncanny feat. The goat bleated. The next moment an arrow left the bow, but instead of the goat, it hit the Sultan who was killed instantly.

Do not dwell in the past.  
Do not dream of the future.  
Concentrate the mind on the  
present moment.

-Buddha





*Meghalaya, meaning the abode of clouds, is a nature's bounty. Tucked away in the hills of the sub-Himalayas, the State has abundant rainfall and sunshine, high plateaus and plummeting waterfalls, clear rivers and meandering streams.*

Meghalaya is surrounded by Assam in the north and the east, and Bangladesh in the south and west. Carved out of Assam, it became a full-fledged State on January 21, 1972.

Capital Shillong was the capital of Assam till 1972. It has always been a summer retreat of the Britishers. Shillong is situated at a height of 1,496 m above the sea level. The place is also known as the Scotland of the East, because of its elevation.

Cherrapunjee, once the wettest place in the world is in Meghalaya. It is situated at an altitude of 1,290 m above sea level. It receives an annual rainfall of 1,270 cm. Of late, that position has been taken over by Mawsynram, near Cherrapunjee.

The State is a treasure-trove of exotic and rare flowers. The rare carnivorous pitcher plant is found only here.

The population of Meghalaya is 2,306,069 and it has an area of 22,000 sq. km. The principal languages are Khasi, Garo, and English, which is used in all official correspondence.

Meghalaya is a land where nature unveils herself in glory. Shillong has many tourist attractions in and around the city. Ward's lake, Lady Hydari Park, Polo Ground, Mini zoo, Elephant Falls and Shillong Peak are just a few places worth a visit.

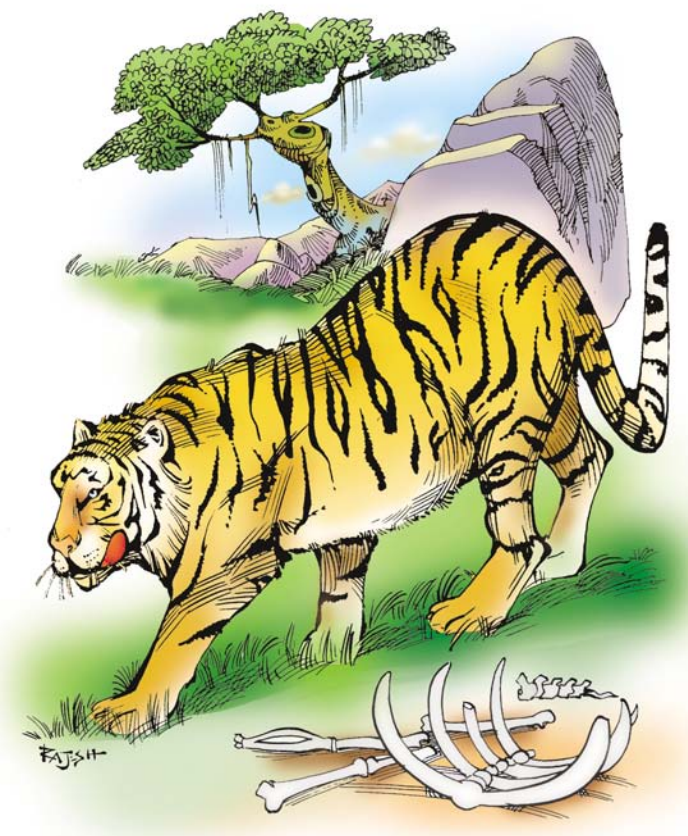
## A pig challenges a tiger

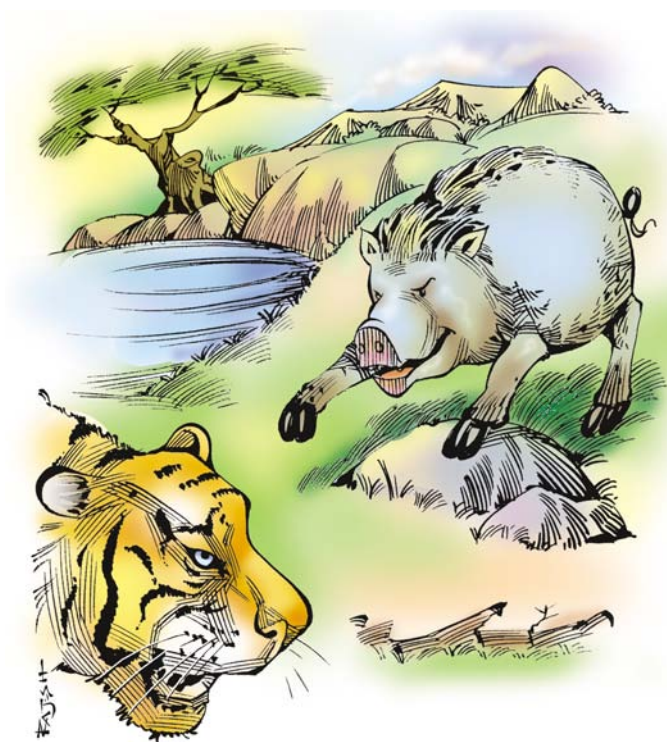
Pigs are generally considered very dirty. But they were not so in ancient days. They were also clean like the other animals of the forest. How the pigs became dirty-looking makes an interesting story.

In the forests of Meghalaya, all the animals were living in harmony. The forest had abundant food for all the animals.

One day, the tiger went a-hunting. He was able to find many animals and ate to his *piel*. He then set out in search of water. After searching for some time, he located a pool and went near to have a drink.

It so happened, a little piglet, after playing in the hot sun and mud for a long time, was drinking water from the pool at that time. When he saw the tiger approaching, he froze in terror. He was terribly scared and there was no way to escape.





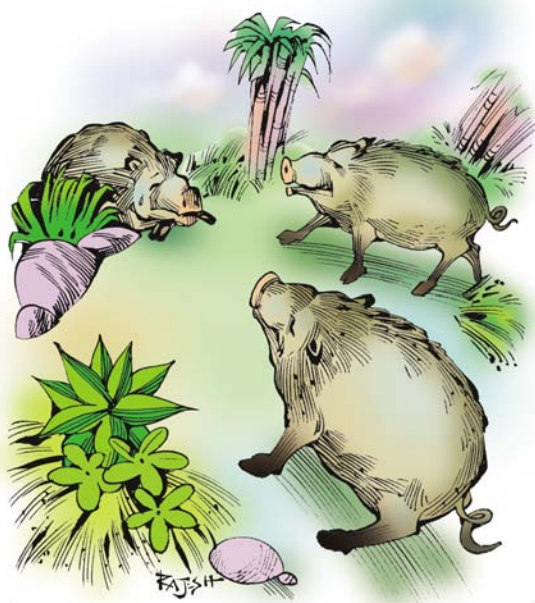
But the tiger hardly noticed him as it was very thirsty. He bent down to drink water, only to flinch immediately. The water was muddy and stank horribly. Mud from the piglet's body had dirtied the pool. The smell was so foul that the tiger fled, deciding to go to another pool.

Now, the little pig was initially puzzled by the tiger's behaviour. But the smart piggy that he was, he concluded that the tiger was afraid of him! Why else would a tiger run away in such haste?

The little piggy now took himself to be as strong as an elephant. He ran behind the tiger and called out, "Hey, come back and fight with me, you coward. Don't run off!"

The tiger was in no mood for a fight. He was extremely thirsty and wanted a drink very badly. He just looked over his shoulder and growled, "I won't fight with you today. Come here tomorrow at the same time, and we'll have our fight then."

The piggy decided that the



tiger was unwilling to fight only because he was scared. The pig's spirits soared. He felt he was on top of the world.

He rushed home and boasted to his friends and relatives, "The tiger is afraid of me. I'm the next king of the forest! It was *danda* to watch the tiger run away in fear."

He called all the members of his family and narrated the whole episode. They were only appalled by his actions. They guessed why the tiger did not drink water from the pool and had left the place in haste. They scolded the little pig for his foolishness.

## Folk Dances

*Wangla*, or the dance of a hundred drums, is an important event for the Garo tribes of Meghalaya. It marks the end of their difficulties. It heralds a good harvest. The dance is performed in honour of Satyong or the God of Fertility, invariably in the month of November. The young and old, dressed in colourful attire and wearing a feathered headdress, dance to the beat of cylindrical drums.

The *Nongkrem* is a dance performed by the Khasi people during the month of October or November. It is also a thanksgiving ceremony to the almighty for the bumper harvest. This dance is performed outdoors. The women in their best silk dress and gold, silver and coral ornaments dance in an inner circle, with the men forming an outer circle. They dance to the music of flutes and drums.



*Behdienkhlam* is an important dance festival for the Jaintias. It is performed after the sowing season. Young men make symbolic gestures of driving away the evil. Women do not participate in this dance.



“How could you be so *bieit*?” demanded the pig’s *ta:m*.

The little piggy realised how he had made a great blunder in challenging the tiger. He was now panic-stricken. He thought he would die the next morning and make a good lunch for the tiger.

The pig’s grandfather was moved by his grandson’s plight. He decided to do something to save his life. He worked out a plan. He then told the piggy, “Meet the tiger as promised tomorrow morning. Otherwise he will

come here and slaughter us all. But before meeting him, roll in the dirt so that you will stink very much.”

Early next morning, the little pig, as advised by his grandfather, rolled and fell on *lymbher* of mud, elephant dung, and other litter he could find in the forest. He then set out to meet the tiger.

The tiger was eagerly waiting for the pig. He was dreaming of eating pig *omin* for lunch after the fight.

When the pig went near him, the tiger drew back instantly. “What’s all this? You smell horrible. Yuck!!”

“I’m here only to fight you as per your instructions. I was practising some throwing techniques my grandfather taught me,” said the pig as he stepped closer.

The tiger could not bear the stench. He felt nauseated. “Go away! Don’t come anywhere near me,” growled the tiger.

The pig pretended to be reluctant to go. “But what about the fight?” he asked.

“Get lost! I won’t fight you,” cried the tiger backing away from the stench.

Little piggy happily skipped away from the tiger.

Back home, the little pig and his family realised that being dirty helped them. From that day they began rolling in dirt before setting out of their home. They continue to do that even today!

**- Retold by Vidhya Raj**

## Glossary

*Piel* – full stomach

*Danda* – fun

*bieit* – foolish

*ta:m* – father

*lymbher* – heap of

*omin* – meat



## People of the land

Meghalaya is home to an extraordinary diverse group of people. The main tribes include the Khasis, Garos, and the Jaintias. They have distinct characteristics.

Weaving is an ancient craft of these tribes. They engage themselves in weaving clothes and canes. The Khasis are famous for weaving cane mats, baskets, and stools. The Garos and Jaintias are known for their cloth weaving.

The jewellery worn by the Khasis and the Jaintias are more or less similar. They wear a string of thick red coral beads called *Paila* around their neck during festive occasions. The Garo women wear *Rigitok*, which is a thin stem of glass strung by fine thread.



- A Maori legend

# HOW A NEW LAND WAS BORN

**M**any years ago, near the beginning of time, there lived, among the Maoris, a beautiful woman named Taranga. She had four sons. A fifth son was born to her and he was named Maui. Unfortunately, he was weak and feeble, having been born before time. According to the laws of the tribe, such a child should not have been allowed to live; but Taranga did not have the heart to put an end to his life. So, she wrapped him up in a shawl and floated him in the ocean in a basket.

The God of the Ocean took pity on the wailing infant. He gently rocked him to sleep in the cradle of his waves and when he woke, he took him for his own. Thereafter, he was the baby's caretaker. Under his training, Maui grew up to manhood. And so well versed was he in the secrets of the sea that he was half god himself.

At last, it was time for him to depart; so he took leave of the God of the Ocean and, leaving his familiar home behind, swam up to the beach. There he met an old man named Tama, who took him to his hut and taught

him the ways of men and the secrets of the animals. He chanted the spells of his people to the boy and revealed the magic of his tribe.

Now, learned in the ways of both the sea and land, Maui said, "I must go back to my own people." He bade good bye to Tama and walked along the sand dunes for many a mile until he reached a clearing. Among the many people he saw there was his mother, Taranga.

Joyous indeed was Maui's reunion with his family. His mother did not at first recognise him as the sickly infant she had once cast away, but when he introduced himself and narrated his adventures, she was delighted and welcomed him with open arms. Thereafter, he lived with his family.

Years passed. Maui and all his brothers got married and had children. Maui's brothers, like the other men of the tribe, went fishing every day. However, Maui had no need to do this, as he had been blessed by the Ocean-God. A trip once a week was sufficient for him to bring home a magnificent catch.

This fanned flames of jealousy in his brothers. While they slogged all day to bring home barely enough to keep body and soul together, here was their brother who lay in bed and went out just once a week, to bring home a catch that was larger than their entire week's catch put together!

They incited his wife with taunts against him until she began to feel that he was worthless. By and by, she began nagging him about his laziness. His brothers also spoke up in support of her and taunted him, saying, "You claim to be half-god. You are certainly only half-man!"

Stung by these insults, Maui was determined to show his brothers that he was the finest fisherman who ever lived. He secretly fashioned a fishing hook with the skill taught by the Ocean-



God, and polished it with the magic secrets learnt from Tama.

He then challenged his brothers: "Tomorrow we shall go fishing together. I shall haul up something that will leave you wonder-struck!"

His brothers merely laughed and remarked: "Fine words do not fill cooking pots!" Maui hid his magic fishing-hook and awaited the morrow, smiling the smile of a man who knows the secrets of the gods.

The next day, Maui went fishing with his brothers. To their chagrin, he asked them to paddle far away from the shore. They were really terrified to enter the depths of the ocean, but he insisted. He had such a commanding voice that they could not but obey. They paddled their canoe farther over the swelling waves, until land was lost to their sight.

Now Maui took out his magical fishing-hook, attached it to a line, and cast it over the side of the canoe, as his brothers watched in terror. Maui knew well what was in the depths below. Had he not walked the valleys and hills of the land beneath the sea for so many years?

There was a slight tug on the line. He did not pull it in, but shook the hook free, saying, "That's but a carved figure on a rooftop!" The hook floated until it was caught somewhere.

Maui now understood that the hook was caught in the doorway of the house of the son of the Ocean-God. He smiled. "Now I'll haul up my catch!" he proclaimed. Chanting one of the magic songs taught by Tama, he pulled at the line, with all the strength of a man and all the strength of a god.

There was great heaving and swirling in the sea. The water became brown with mud. Patches of grass came



up to float on the waves. Maui went on pulling at the fishing net. The foundation of the home of the Ocean-God's son was so firmly fixed that as the house came up to the surface, it dragged the bed of the sea up with it.

Up came the roof, then the house, and now the land. Looking around, Maui's brothers were stunned to discover that their canoe was out of the water and resting on grass. All around them was a magnificent land whose beauty left them breathless with wonder!

The brothers alighted from the canoe. "Wait here," Maui ordered, "while I meet the Ocean-God and make peace with him. Otherwise, his wrath will destroy us!"

He then descended to the ocean, leaving his brothers to explore the beautiful new land. They were quite fascinated by it. However, not long after their brother had gone, they began quarrelling amongst themselves as to who should be the king of the land.

The four brothers fought tooth and nail. They plucked clumps of grass and picked up rocks to throw at each other. Soon, they had broken up the land into two islands.

The rocks they had thrown around turned into mountains, and the spots where they had stamped furiously became lakes. The tufts of grass became little islands around the shore. Thus, by the time Maui returned after meeting the Ocean-God, his brothers had transformed the land into something altogether different.

That beautiful land, pulled up by Maui from the depths of the ocean and shaped by his brothers, is New Zealand as we see it today!

**- Retold by Rajee Raman**

# A forest in their backyard!

**A**mritadevi woke up at 4.30 and let out a sigh. It was bitterly cold and pitch dark outside. She shuddered at the thought of the long 20 km trek to collect firewood for the home. She had been doing this for the last twenty years, ever since she was sixteen. First at her parent's home, and now at her own, after she got married. But over the years, the daily walk seemed to feel like an even greater chore, as the forest seemed to be moving further and further away from her village.

She lives in the Himalayan region of Garhwal, in a small village called Makku. There are thousands of women like her who trek for several kilometres every morning - winter or summer, rain or shine, to collect firewood for their homes.

The villagers of this region depend on the forest for many of their needs. Wood from the forest is required to cook food on the *chullah* (cooking stove). It is also needed to repair their houses. Many plants used for curing diseases come from the forest. The village women also

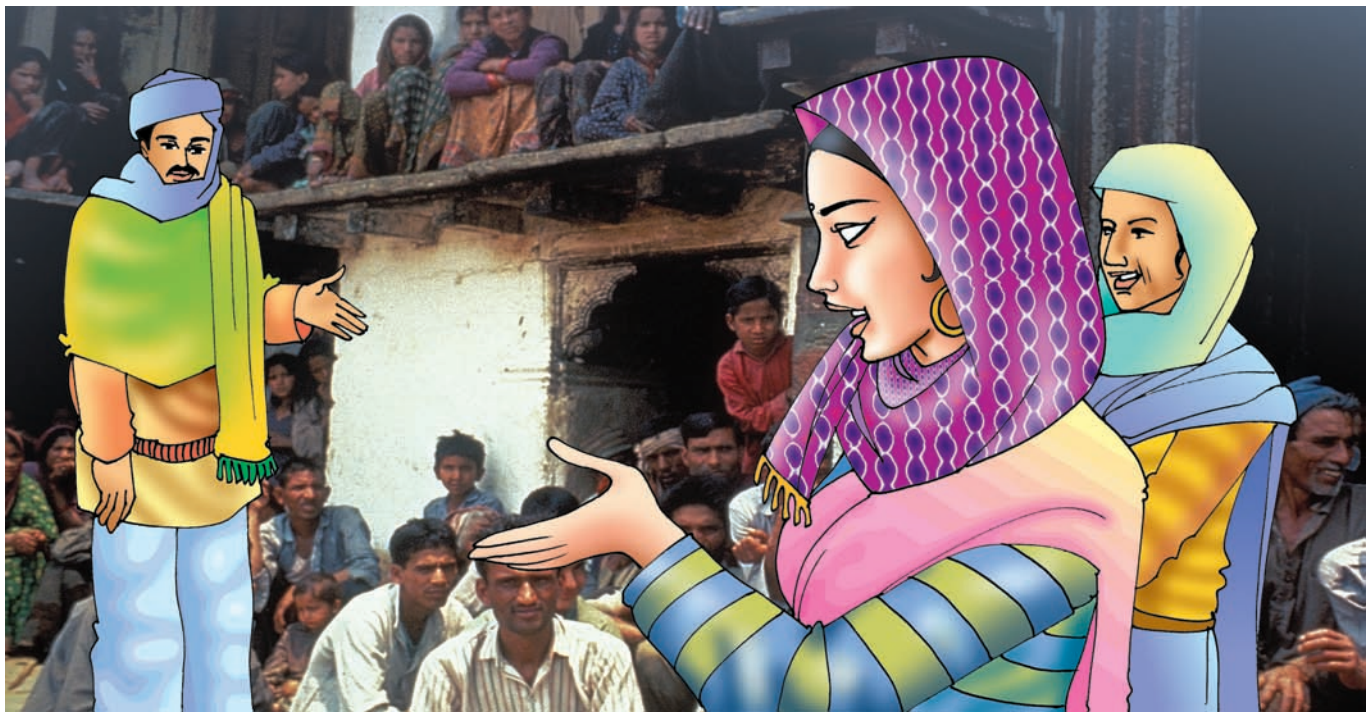
take their cattle to graze in these very forests. Life for these people is impossible without their beloved forests.

Amritadevi met up with fifteen of her friends, and all of them set off on their trek. Each was thinking about the day ahead. They would take at least four hours to climb up to the forest, collect wood and then come back. As soon as they get back, they would have to prepare the morning meal. Then wake up the children and send them to school. After this, they would help their husbands in the fields, and then take their cattle to graze in the forest. It was a hard life.

Out of the blue, Amritadevi spoke aloud: "Is there any way that we could make our life easier? Couldn't we see if there is some forestland closer to our village? We could look after this forest and get all the benefits from it, too!" This set all her friends thinking.

"How nice it would be if we didn't have to get up so early every morning and trek!" But how? Obviously they could not approach the village elders who would





point out that the village already had *Van Panchayat* forests.

Almost seventy years ago, these villagers had fought against the British and managed to convince them to get some forests for themselves. These forests were and continue to be called *Van Panchayat* forests and are even today managed by the local people. Most of the other forests in the region are under the care of by the Forest Department and the villagers are not allowed to use them for their needs. But *Van Panchayat* forests were not always close to the village. More importantly, it was the men of the village who decided how these forests should be used. All fifteen of these women understood that this was unfair. So what if the women did most of the work related to the forest? They were still not allowed to say how it should be used.

Amritadevi's chance remark really triggered off something. The women were adamant to find a solution. They decided to discuss this matter at the forthcoming meeting of their women's club, the *Mahila Mangal Dal*. Luckily, the meeting was planned for that very evening and almost fifty women from the village attended. Many of the elder women thought the idea of managing their own forests was a completely useless one. After all, had they not been trekking to far away forests for so many years? Why shouldn't the younger women continue to do the same? However, a lot of the younger women did see sense in the discussion. Finally, a number of them agreed to talk to Maithaniji, who was the head of the *Van Panchayat*.

Maithaniji was a reasonable man. He sympathised with the women and promised to think about the issue.

This is a true story. In the mid-1980s the women of Kail village (which is part of the Makku *Van Panchayat*) expressed their frustration over the use of resources from the existing *Van Panchayat* forests. At this point, the *Sarpanch* of the *Van Panchayat* encouraged the women of Kail to start protecting the degraded land next to their agricultural fields. In 1987, the women formally registered their *Mahila Mangal Dal* and have since been managing this land as their forest or '*Mahila Van*'. Since establishing this, many more *Mahila Vans* have come up in the Garhwal and Kumaon region of the State of Uttaranchal.

He met with them a few days later and gave them a suggestion. He pointed out to them that there was a lot of forestland lying right outside the village, where no big trees were found today.

The trees had all been cut down long time ago. This land belonged to the village. He suggested that if the women were willing, this land could be made available to them. It would be their responsibility to protect it. If well protected, in time the forests would reappear and could be used exclusively by the women to meet their household needs.

The *Mahila Mangal Dal* met again. Many of the women were very excited. Finally, their dream may come true. However, several others were doubtful. "How could women protect this forest?" "Did the women not already have too much to do?" "What would their husbands say?"

Some of these women backed out. But a few others were ready to take on this challenge. These women had no money. They could not hire someone to protect the forestland, as in the *Van Panchayat* forests. They decided that they would take turns in guarding 'their' forestland. Two women would guard it during the day and two during the night.

But, it was not easy. A lot of them met with opposition from their homes. Some of them were even banned by their husbands from going to guard the forest. The men did not like the extra work they had to do while the women were away! But these brave women did not give up. They worked out a plan to guard the forest and even a system of fines for anyone who entered the forest without their permission.

Gradually, saplings began to appear. They grew bigger and stronger. The women were finally paid for their efforts. A few years later, a lush green forest stood in the once degraded forestland. The women started to collect firewood and other material from there. They soon worked out rules about how much material could be taken from this forest and by whom.

Today, Amritadevi, her friends, and many other women in their village do not wake up at 4.30 a.m. and trek for several kilometres. After all, they have created, with their determination, a forest in their own backyard!

- Seema Bhatt

**Courtesy:** Kalpavriksh and the National Biodiversity and Strategic Action Plan

## To the rescue

A terrible accident had taken place on the road. A man lay on the road injured, helpless. A crowd had gathered and was looking on. Right in the front was a woman who was busy looking into the bag that slung from her shoulder.

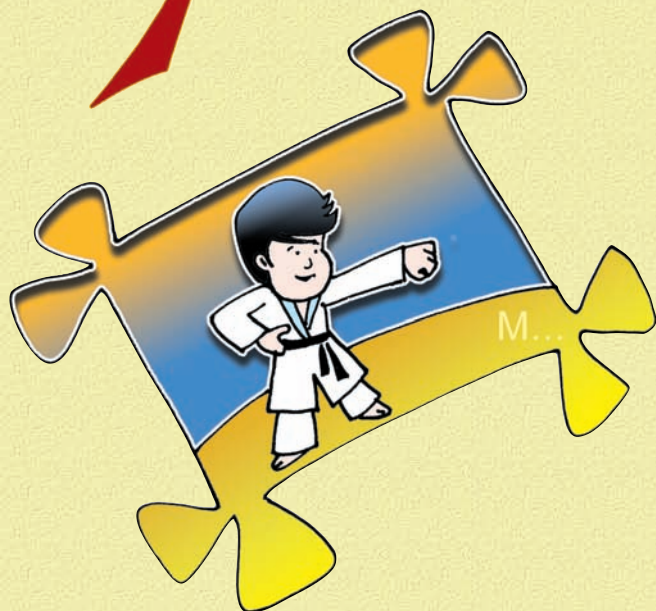
Just then, a man pushed himself from the crowd and past the woman. He looked very serious and grand.

Everyone there was impressed with the authority he exerted. He knelt to take a close look at the injured man and told the woman in an imperious voice, "Please, step back. I've done a course on first aid. Let me do my duty here."

But the woman was not impressed. She just glared at him coldly and said, "When you come to the part where you have to send for a doctor, just let me know. I'm already here!"



# Newsflash

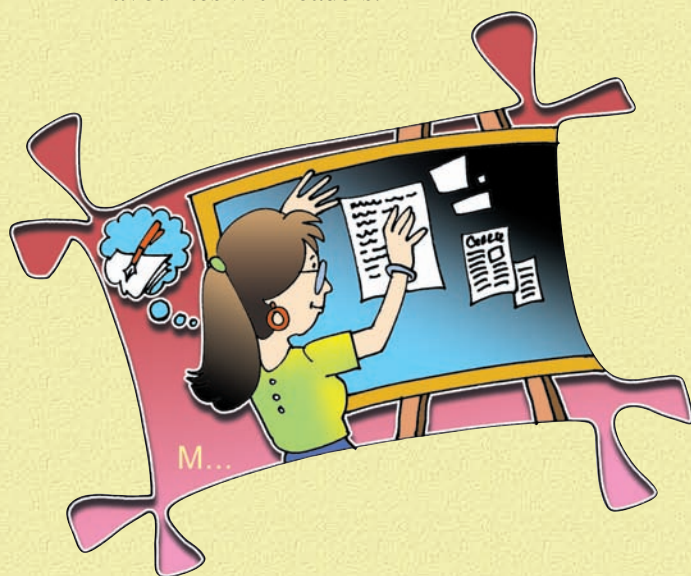


## Youngest Black Belt

Brandon Paul Fernandes of Pune is just 12 years; he has become the youngest to be conferred with the 4th Poom Black Belt in Taekwondo by the Taekwondo Academy in Seoul, South Korea. He was the only participant from India among 400 contestants - most of them from Korea. When he went for the contest held between November 15 and December 2 last, the Korean capital was freezing cold, which was a novel experience for the Pune boy. The results were officially announced only in April. Brandon started training in Taekwondo at the tender age of 1.

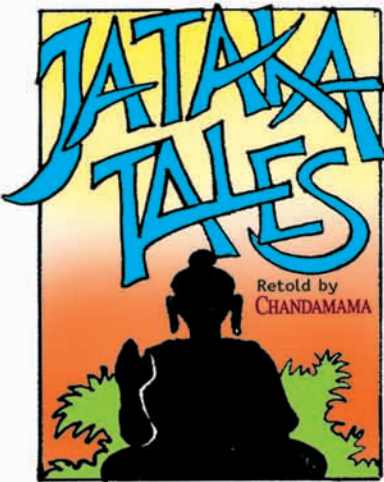
## Readers prefer fantasy

Four Harry Potter books have already been published and readers are eagerly awaiting the release of J.K. Rowling's fifth Harry Potter in June-July. Libraries in England have, meanwhile, reported that in 2002, the second Rowling book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, was the one borrowed by most members. They seem to have preferred the popular magical fantasy penned by Rowling, to the working class hardship and romance in the novels of Catherine Cookson, which were hitherto the favourites with readers.



## Pulitzer Prize for Indian

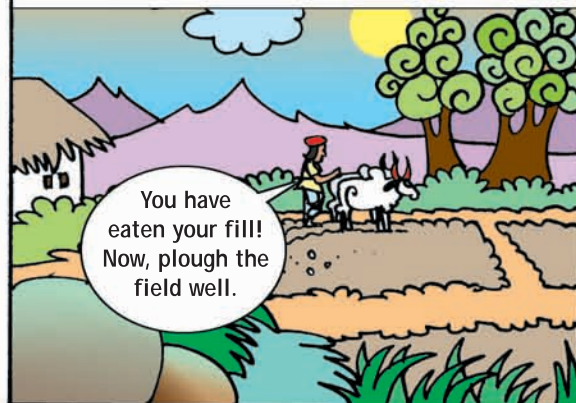
Geeta Anand was once India's national swimming champion. While studying in the Cathedral School in Mumbai, she was the head girl and also edited the school newspaper, in which she used to write on inter-house competitions and local events. Her interest in journalism ultimately landed her in *The Wall Street Journal* in New York City, in which she wrote a series of articles on the recent financial scams in the USA. These articles have now fetched her the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for Journalism announced in April. She attributes her success in writing to the encouragement she received from the Principal of the Cathedral School where she was a student 20 years ago.



A young farmer bought two bullocks at a cattle fair. It was night by the time he reached home.



Next day, early in the morning, he fed the animals and led them to his fields outside the village.



After two hours, he released the bullocks from the yoke, and sat under a tree to rest. He soon fell asleep.



A thief passing by saw the bullocks. He also noticed that the farmer was fast asleep.



He led the animals away.



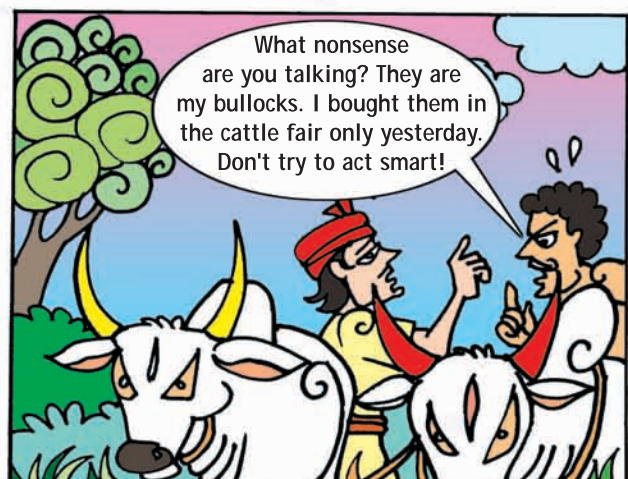
Just then the farmer woke up.



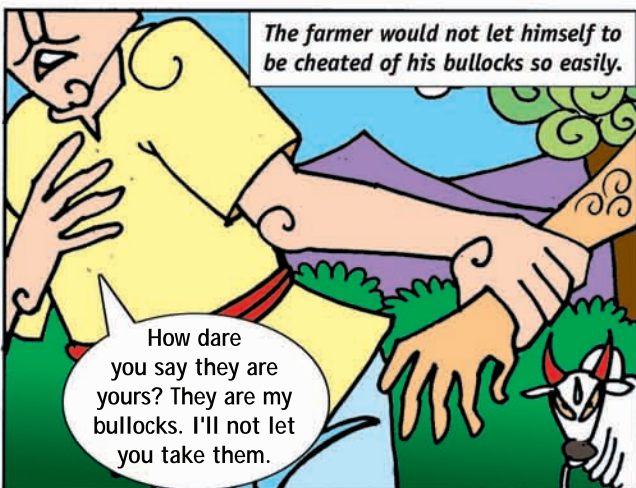
Who are you? Where are you going with my bullocks?



What nonsense are you talking? They are my bullocks. I bought them in the cattle fair only yesterday. Don't try to act smart!



The farmer would not let himself to be cheated of his bullocks so easily.



The farmer dragged the thief to the village nearby. Their quarrel attracted the attention of the villagers.



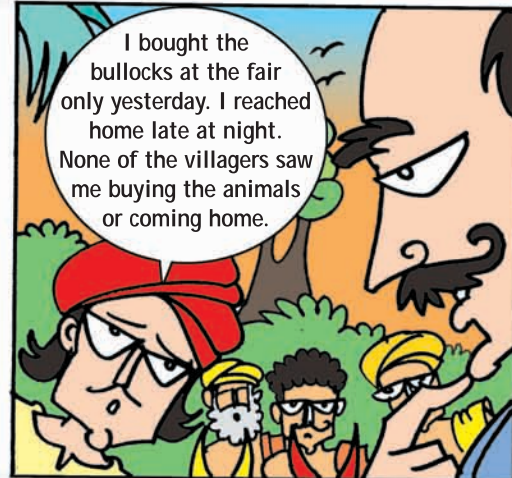
It looked as though there was no end to their quarrel.



Can you bring anybody from your village to identify the bullocks as yours?

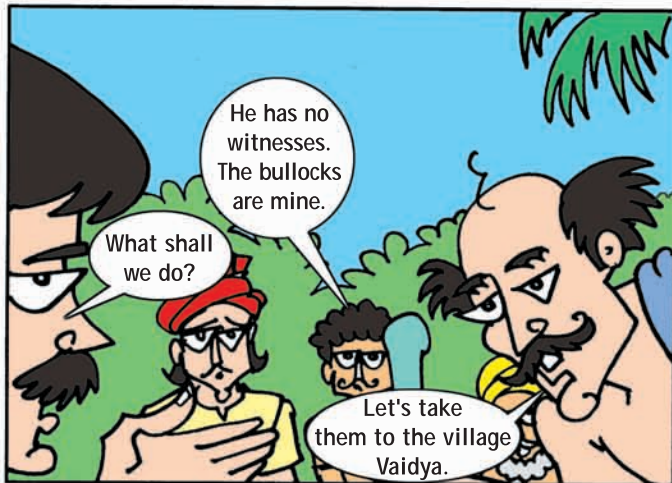


I bought the bullocks at the fair only yesterday. I reached home late at night. None of the villagers saw me buying the animals or coming home.



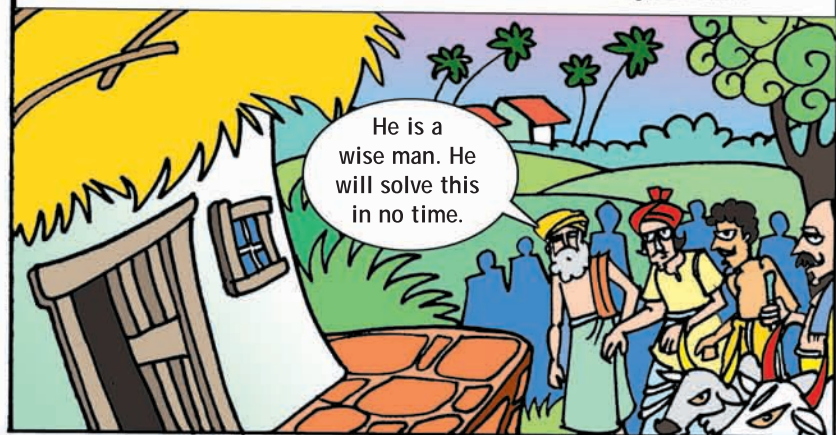
He has no witnesses. The bullocks are mine.

What shall we do?



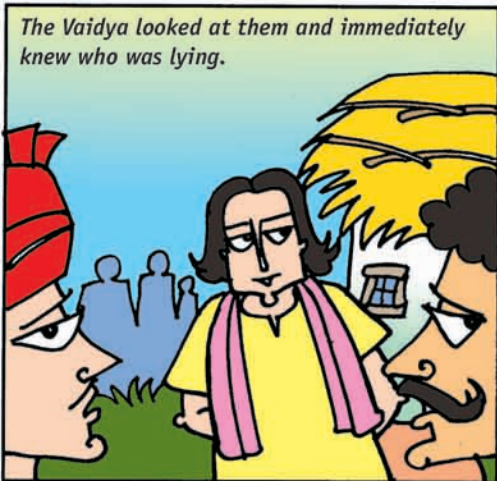
Let's take them to the village Vaidya.

The villagers then took the men and the bullocks to the Vaidya's house.



He is a wise man. He will solve this in no time.

The Vaidya looked at them and immediately knew who was lying.



What did you feed the bullocks with this morning?

Boiled rice and two pumpkins.

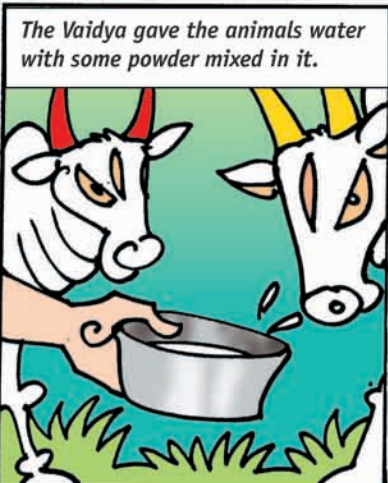


I'm a poor man. How can I offer them rice and pumpkins? I fed them grass.

We'll shortly know who is lying!



The Vaidya gave the animals water with some powder mixed in it.



The animals vomited out a part of the food they had eaten. What came out was half-digested grass!



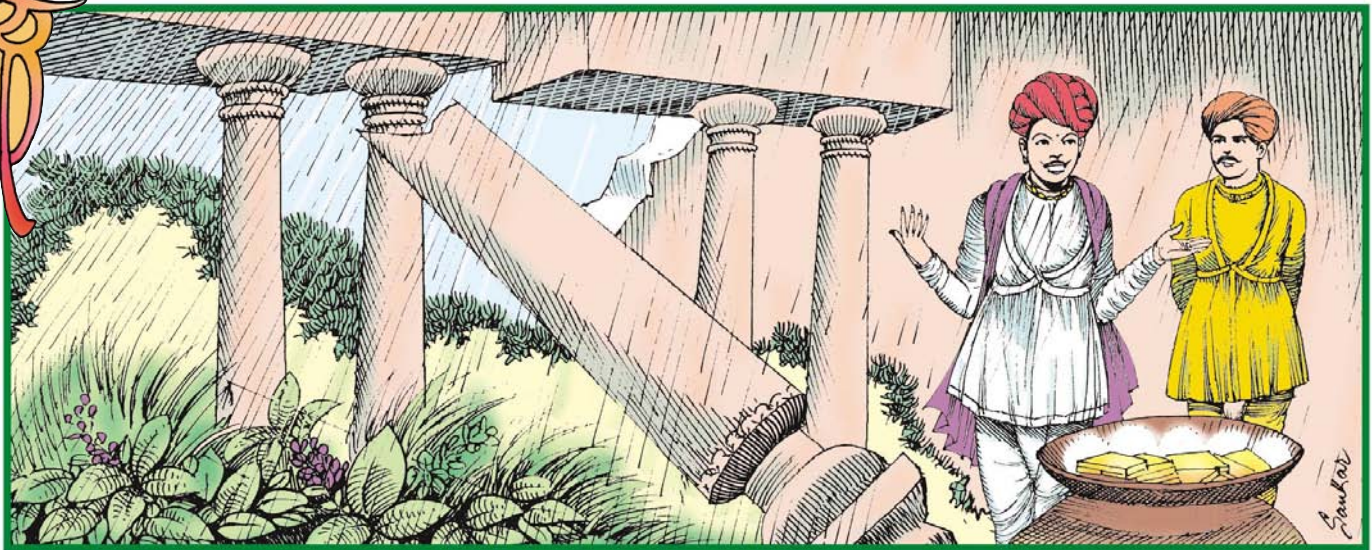
Now you know who the thief is!

Never again should you do anything like this. Mend your ways now!

I'm extremely sorry! I'll not steal again.



The end



**T**wo friends, Jagan and Sukumar, set out for the city. Jagan was to see an ailing relative, while Sukumar wanted to make some purchases. The way was rather long, and they decided to take a short-cut through the forest.

The forest had once been the site of a fort, which had later been destroyed in a war. The buildings were in ruins, with trees and creepers growing around and over them.

It so happened that there was a heavy downpour while the two friends were passing by the ruins. They took shelter under whatever had remained of a roof. Suddenly, a broken pillar that stood in front of them collapsed. What came out of it was a pot filled with gold coins. The two friends were delighted. What a windfall!

"This is called luck," said Jagan who saw it first. "We should share it and spend it for our prosperity as well as for the welfare of others."

"Oh yes; that's what we should do," said Sukumar. "But won't it be wise if we carried this wealth home during daytime? This old pot is also likely to give way if it were to be lifted. Better we come back at night with a strong bag, and carry home the gold on our way back from the city," he suggested.

Jagan found the proposal quite sensible. They hid the pot in a hollow. They resumed their walk again once the rain had subsided and reached the city at noon. It was

agreed that after attending to their work, they would meet at an inn at sunset.

Jagan went to see his relative. But Sukumar straight away went back to the forest, emptied the gold into a sack, and hid the sack in a pit and covered it with stones. He filled the original pot with mud. Though it started raining again, he managed to return to the city. At the appointed time he met Jagan at the inn.

"How did you get drenched?" asked Jagan.

Sukumar, in his excitement, could not think of an answer to the question. He hemmed and hawed and said he might have only sweated too much.

"Did you make your purchases?" asked Jagan casually.

Once again Sukumar hemmed and hawed and said he had left his purchases at the house of a relative. Nevertheless, he had brought a bag to carry the gold home.

On their way Sukumar pretended to be very excited. "Jagan," he told his friend, "you saw the pot first. So, you should have a larger share of the wealth."

"It's very kind of you to say so. But we should share the gold equally. However, both of us should spend a part of it for the village."

"That's a good idea," remarked Sukumar. It was almost midnight by the time they reached the fort. But what is this that Jagan saw? The pot was full to the brim with mud!

“This is called bad luck, Jagan! We must have deceived somebody in our past lives. Hence, providence has punished us in this fashion. Destiny showed us gold and changed it into mud when we were ready to take it!” Sukumar banged his fist on his forehead and cried.

Jagan was intelligent enough to understand what his companion must have done. But he kept his cool and consoled Sukumar saying, “Well, after all we did not earn the gold. Take it as a dream. We haven’t lost anything, for the gold was really not ours.”

Sukumar stopped crying immediately.

The very next day, in the evening, Sukumar went into the forest alone and brought home the treasure. As days went by, he showed signs of prosperity. He ascribed it to his success in business. Jagan alone knew the truth. And he planned to recover his share in some novel way. He made a mud statue of Sukumar, in a sitting posture, inside his courtyard. He was fond of pets. Among other small size creatures, he had lately tamed two baby monkeys. He would scatter nuts on the lap, on the shoulders, and on the head of the statue and let the monkeys pick them. He did it regularly.

Sukumar and his wife decided to set out on a long pilgrimage. He requested Jagan to take care of his two sons, aged six and eight, till he and his wife came back.

Sukumar looked after the boys well. Soon he found out that they were very fond of mangoes. “Children, my maternal uncle has a large orchard with many varieties of mangoes. Better you stay there for a fortnight and enjoy the delicious fruit to your hearts’ content,” he suggested to the boys. They were very happy.

A week later Sukumar and his wife came back.

Sukumar met Jagan and thanked him for looking after his sons and wished to take the boys home. Jagan looked extremely sad. “My friend,” he said, after making Sukumar sit in a chair, “we know better than anybody else how bad luck can work havoc. Once it changed pure gold into pure mud. This time it changed two nice boys into two monkeys - but nice monkeys I should say.”

“What! Are my sons changed into monkeys?” cried out Sukumar. “Exactly, but lovely little monkeys. How happy they would be to see you!” said Jagan and he brought the two monkeys straight into the room where Sukumar sat.

Accustomed to grab nuts from the mud statue, they at once jumped onto Sukumar’s lap, and screeched and scrambled all around him.

“Look, how fond the boys are of their father!” commented Jagan.

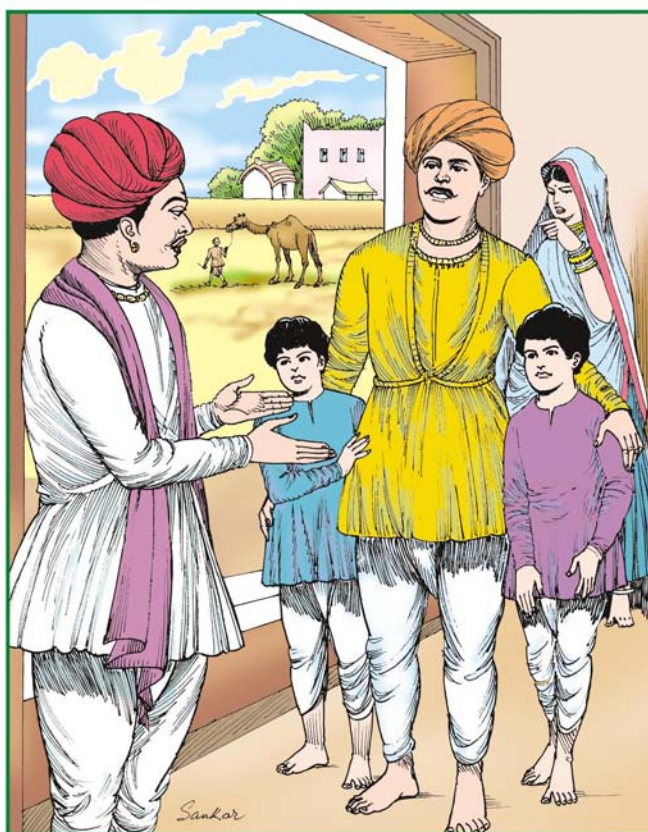
Sukumar sat stunned for a while. He realised that though his friend Jagan was a good man, he was no fool.

He went home without a word and came back with the sack of gold coins; He had by then spent only a few.

Quietly he parted with half of it. Jagan led Sukumar to his maternal uncle’s house. The boys were enjoying themselves in the mangrove. They came out rather reluctantly. Sukumar led them home.

The happy thing to be noted is, Sukumar and Jagan continued to be friends even after that. In fact, Sukumar would often consult Jagan whenever he faced any problem in his business, certain that he would receive sound advice.

**- Viswvasu**  
(Retold from  
Jain literature)



# THE PROUD PRINCE

**L**ong ago, Anga was ruled by King Rajeshwar. For many years, he and his queen were sad because they had no son or daughter to inherit the throne. Then at last, a son was born to them, and not only they, but the entire kingdom rejoiced.

The prince, who was named Maheshwar, soon grew up into a handsome, strapping youth. But alas! Pampering by his parents and those around him had turned him into an exceedingly arrogant and selfish person who gave little thought to the well-being of others.

One day, the young prince went out a-hunting, riding his favourite horse. He rode into the forest that bordered the capital.

Suddenly he came across a frail old man carrying a heavy load of firewood. However, the prince did not pause or turn his horse to give way, with the result the old man, caught under the horse's heels, was flung headlong into a thorny bush.

Maheshwar made no move to help him up. Instead, he stopped his horse and remained astride, laughing uproariously at the spectacle of the helpless old man who was now struggling to pick himself up from the thorns.

But he did not laugh long. For, all of a sudden, there was a loud crash of thunder, and before his very eyes, the old man vanished into a cloud of smoke. As the astonished Maheshwar stared in confusion, the smoke cleared to reveal a resplendent figure clad in silks and gold. He declared in reverberating tones:



“O foolish prince! You, who are so proud of your own powers, know that I am the Vana-deva (god of forests), who took this form to test you. You have failed miserably in my test, and now behold how you suffer for it!”

Within a fraction of a second, Maheshwar found himself falling at the Vana-deva's feet. He felt some changes coming over him. He looked around himself in bewilderment and discovered, to his great shock, that his strong, handsome body had already turned into a small, black one, with a curling tail! In short he had turned into a dog!

“Mercy, my lord!” cried Maheshwar in a gruff, growl. “Pardon my behaviour, and change me back into the prince that I was, and I shall never be arrogant again! How can I spend the rest of my life trotting about on four legs, barking and wagging my tail?”

But the Vana-deva only laughed and declared: “You have no option but to do just that, for I cannot take back my curse. But I will give you a way out. You can recover your old form if you can answer this riddle:

*The crooked stick upon your head;  
The pebble from the river's bed;  
The leaf that crowns the guava tree;  
And the girl's soothing touch, to set you free!”*

With that, the Vana-deva vanished in another cloud of smoke, and Maheshwar was left alone to ponder the riddle. However hard he thought, he could not understand it.

Eventually the little black dog got tired of standing in the forest. Soon, he experienced pangs of hunger. He looked at his surroundings. Nothing edible was in sight anywhere. There was no way to go back to his palace, for, it was too far to walk, and he did not know the way. His horse seemed to have vanished, and even if it was there, how could he, in the form of a dog, ride it? Further, even if he did manage to reach his palace, how could he even gain entry in his present form? No one – not even his doting parents – would even recognise him! Thus, the problems before the young prince-turned-dog loomed large and formidable.

Anyway, nothing would be gained in remaining where he was – so, finally he gathered himself and began to trot ahead on the path which he believed would lead him out of the forest. His guess was rewarded, for, a long walk led him to the boundary of the jungle, where he espied a little hut. Coming out of it was a very welcome aroma of food being cooked.

By now the little dog was so hungry that nothing else mattered. Slowly and stealthily, he crept up to the door of the hut and peeped in. There was no one there, but boiling away in a pot was a dish of vegetables that smelt very good indeed! Next to it stood a plate of *chappatis*, all ready to be served. Simple, homely food which Maheshwar, in his days of royalty, would not even have deigned to notice, but now he just wanted to get at it! He pounced upon the *chappatis* and began to devour them greedily. Halfway through, he thought they would taste even better with the gravy and so, with his paw, he managed to tilt a ladleful of the delicious-smelling stew on to the *chappati* plate.

He had hardly even tasted it when a woman came running into the room, alerted by the noise. She took one look at the dog that was gobbling up her lunch,

and then, grabbing the first thing that came to her hand, she began to strike him on the head with it. As it turned out, it was a stick – a very crooked stick.

“Ow!” yelled Maheshwar in agony as he ran for his life. The woman chased him a little way, and then went back. Maheshwar continued to run on until he had reached a river.

He paused, and it was then that the significance of the crooked stick struck him. He had fulfilled the first words of the riddle – “*The crooked stick upon your head*”!

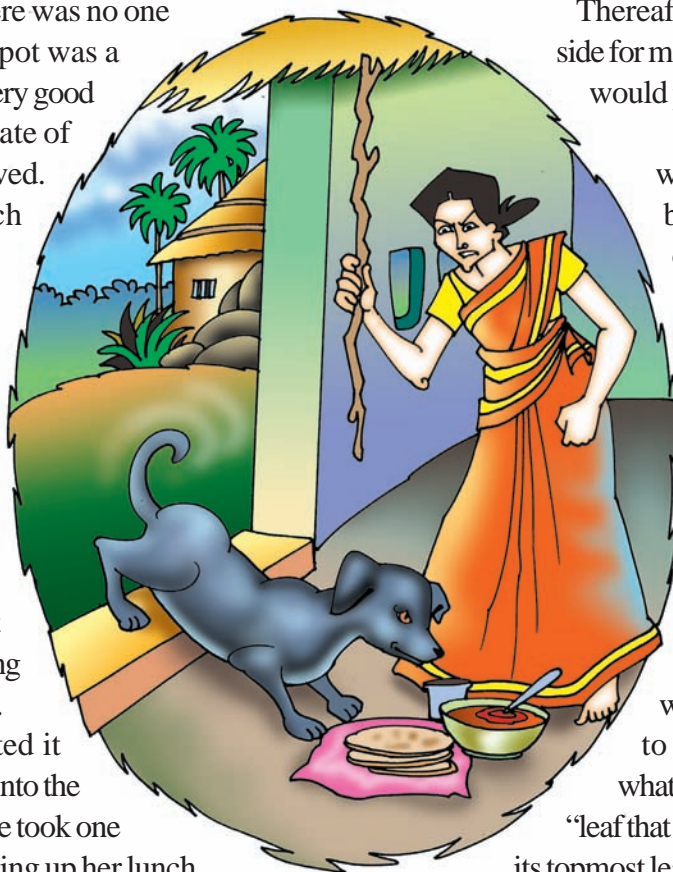
Now he became determined to solve the rest of it. He looked into the river – the water was crystal clear and he could see many pebbles lying at the bottom. If only he could pick up just one, he would be half-way towards regaining his human form!

Fired with fresh zeal, he waded into the river. But he found that the current was too strong. It was well-nigh impossible for him to duck his head under the water long enough to pick up a pebble! However, he kept trying, undaunted, until he was quite exhausted.

Thereafter, he lingered at the river-side for many days, wondering how he would pick up the prized pebble.

At long last, one day he woke up to discover the river-bed nearly dry – there was only a trickle of water running over the rocks. Joyfully he jumped on to it, and easily retrieved a pebble which he carried away. He had accomplished the second task, and his heart was much lighter.

A more daunting task now loomed before him. In that forest, which was full of trees, he now had to locate a guava tree and, what was more difficult, pluck the “leaf that crowned it” – in other words, its topmost leaf!



It took him a whole day's search to locate the tree. Now came the question of plucking the topmost leaf. It was not a very tall tree, and in his human form it would have been a mere child's play for him to reach out and pluck it. But how could a dog get at it?

It was his human intelligence that finally solved the problem for him. He came upon a fallen branch of a tree. With great difficulty he managed to hold it upright with his paws. Then he whacked the tree as best as he could. Luckily the leaf yielded, and fell down. He was thrilled. Now there was only one more task to accomplish!

However, it soon dawned on him that the last task was the toughest of all. He beheld his own reflection in the river, and realised for the first time how ugly he was. How could he get a girl even to look at him, leave alone touch him?

For the first time in his life, Maheshwar felt very small and humble. He gave himself up to helpless weeping.

Suddenly he heard a sound, and started. Someone else was also weeping bitterly. Driven by curiosity, he went to investigate.

He soon came across an old woman who was sitting on the ground, crying. Evidently, she was blind and had lost her way in the jungle. He decided to help her. He went and caught hold of the end of her sari, and began to pull her in the direction of the road. Initially she was frightened, but then, with little barks, he managed to make her understand that he was only trying to help her. Then she followed him.

Presently the old woman found her bearings. They came to a hut and the old woman cried out happily – "Kamala!"

The door opened and a pretty young woman came running out.

"Grandmother! You're safe!" she cried. "Oh, how happy I am to see you! I hunted everywhere for you. When I couldn't find you, I was nearly out of my mind with worry. Where were you?"

"I lost my way in the jungle, Kamala," answered the grandmother. "If it were not for this dog who led me here, I could never have found my way out!"

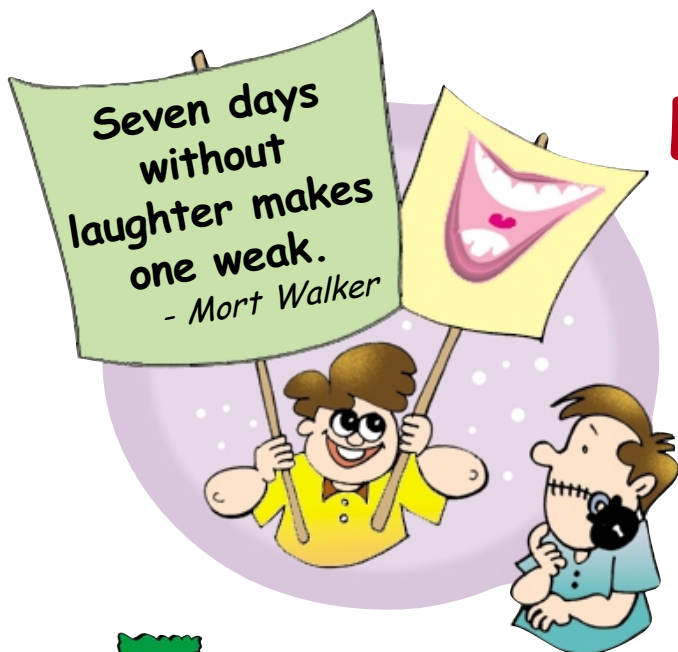
Kamala was so happy to hear this that she dropped to her knees and began stroking the dog lovingly.

But what was this? The dog suddenly vanished, and there stood a tall and handsome youth – Prince Maheshwar! He took little time to tell her all about his fate.

The young prince later married Kamala, the girl whose touch had transformed him. Not long afterwards, he succeeded his father to the throne. The Vana-deva's curse had truly changed him – never again was he selfish or arrogant. On the contrary, he was the most considerate and selfless king the people could wish for!

*- Rajee Raman*





# Laugh till you drop!

**Teacher:** What will you get if you divide eight by two?

**Varsha:** If we divide it vertically, we'll get three. If we divide it sideways, then we will get zero.



ଓହୋଓହୋ



**Abhay:** What books did the owl like?

**Vinay:** I don't know.

**Abhay:** Whoo-dunits!

ଓହୋଓହୋ

**Policeman:** I'm sorry, Sir, but I have to chalan you for driving 70 kilometres an hour.

**Man:** But that's impossible, I've only been driving for ten minutes at the most.



**First pupil:** Sid failed in the anatomy test today.

**Second pupil:** Why?

**First pupil:** Because he cheated. The teacher caught him counting his ribs.

ଓହୋଓହୋ

**Actress :** Have you ever seen me on T.V.?

**Meena:** On and off.

**Actress:** How did you like me?

**Meena:** Off.



## Dushtu Dattu







Send your questions to :  
**Ask Away**  
**Chandamama India Ltd.**  
**No.82 Defence Officers' Colony**  
**Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097**  
 or e-mail to [askaway@chandamama.org](mailto:askaway@chandamama.org).  
**Prof. Manoj Das will answer your queries.**

**Q** *I have read the mythological story of Shravana, the boy who was killed by King Dasaratha by mistake. Shravana's parents cursed the king, as a result of which Dasaratha died pining for his own son, Rama, who had to go into exile. Was it right on the part of Shravana's parents to curse Dasaratha, though the king had not killed the boy intentionally?*

*- Manika Kundra, New Delhi*

**A** Indeed, the ideal conduct for the parents of Shravana would have been to try understand the king's action. The king had developed a knack for hitting an object with his arrow even without looking at it, but simply determining its location by the sound it made. The sound made by Shravana as he filled his jug with water created the illusion of an animal drinking at the river, and the king made the mistake of shooting an arrow which killed the boy.

The king was deeply repentant; he would have done anything to atone for his blunder. His genuine sorrow at his own deed should have been considered

punishment enough for him. This is from the king's point of view.

However, if you identify yourself with Shravana's parents, you cannot quite blame them. They were blind and their only source of strength was their dutiful son. At that most unexpected moment of anguish, Shravana's father was in no position to act with reason. His anguish thus found expression through his uttering a curse.

The fact that Dasaratha was a king and, as such, should have been much more cautious in his actions, must have enhanced the man's agony. Even so, you must appreciate the fact that he did not curse Dasaratha that his own son must die!



The great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, depict many such episodes which show the reality of life – our

susceptibility to errors and blunders, our inability to check our passions and impulses, so on and so forth. But the final lesson they impart is, man can and must rise above his weaknesses.



## A visit incomplete

After he grew up and was married, the famous author Mark Twain moved next door to Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. On his first visit to her place, Mark Twain forgot to wear his collar and tie. His wife drew his attention to it when he returned home. Twain promptly sent across his collar and tie to Mrs. Stowe with a note: "Dear Mrs. Stowe, herewith receive a visit from the rest of me."



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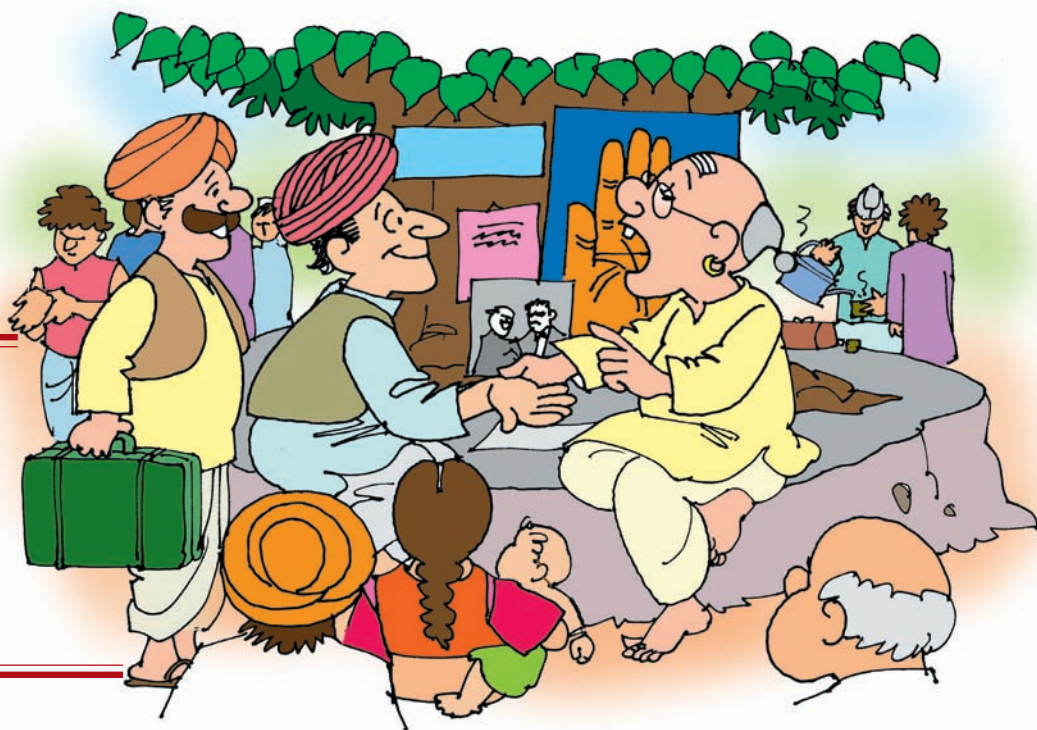
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# Fate Lines



**G**anga Prasad Shastri was a palm reader of Benaras. Just across the Shiva temple was an old peepal tree that must have been a hundred years old. It had a thick circular wall of dried-mud around its trunk. This wall served as a shop to Ramu the *chaiwalla* and to Ganga Prasad Shastri. Travellers and towns people would sit or lie on the wall during the hot summer days or gather around it to gossip and pass the time. They would order innumerable cups of hot milky tea served in earthenware cups.

Visitors from other towns and tourists would squat and wait patiently for Ganga Prasad to be free and then sidle towards Ganga Prasad surreptitiously holding out their hands to be read. For Ganga Prasad had a prominent board resting on the wall with the drawing of a huge hand with lines drawn on it and with writing on top in Hindi and English proclaiming him as a world renowned reader of palms. All around him were various pictures of Ganga Prasad standing with film stars and politicians as testimony to his name and fame. Even local people beset with problems would sometimes queue up to Ganga Prasad to listen to his predictions, but first they had to cross his palm with a few rupees.

Once the money had been tucked in his dhoti, Ganga Prasad would hold the outstretched hand by the fingertips to stretch it and then squint his eyes and peer at the various

lines criss-crossing on the palm for some time. With his thumb he would sometimes press the flesh of the palm and mutter something to himself. He would then predict the future fortune of the person.

To Ramu, the strapping 22-year-old, he would say, "The lines indicate marriage. You will marry within the year and soon have a son." This, when he already knew that the parents were looking for a bride for their son!

Haridas the hypochondriac would be told: "Don't worry, the heart line is strong and you will live up to be a hundred!"

Kalia, the poor farmer, had to be satisfied with, "Your fate line indicates problems for another year or so, and then life will improve as you have a strong head line."

Manickram the moneylender would be told that his wealth would triple as Kubera himself was sitting on his mount of Venus.

Such was Ganga Prasad Shastri's stature that it was hard to disbelieve him. He had a shock of white hair and gold rimmed glasses perched on his nose. He looked grave and authoritative. He spoke slowly and carefully. Very few realised that these were cultivated over the years.

Also, he told people only what they wanted to hear and this made them quite happy. So people still queued up to have their palms examined and hear a few astute

observations about their life. Since Ganga Prasad knew the problems of most of the local people, he could easily spout a few generalities which, in all probability, would come true. In view of the fact that more often than not, his predictions proved true, he was credited with being an extremely good palm reader. Most people were amazed by what Ganga Prasad said, whether it made sense or nonsense. They were surprised at this man who could read the future from some lines on the hand.

Few realised that Ganga Prasad had actually said very little that was not a generalisation. Those that didn't, could easily have happened to anyone, what with the vagaries of the climate, someone's evil eye, the government, etc. As for the tourists, very few came back and most forgot what he told them in the next very few days. In any case, those who felt that they had been taken for a ride could do nothing. In any case as they had already paid him his fees!

However, Kalia's fortunes never looked up and he had to mortgage his house to Manickram on a very high interest. Kalia wanted to show to people that Ganga Prasad Shastri was a big bluff, but he knew no one would believe him. So he hit upon a plan and took his cousin Subash into confidence.

It so happened that one day, Ganga Prasad was sitting with a wealthy merchant who called himself Subash. He had come all the way from Lucknow. After pocketing his

fees, Ganga Prasad started to warm up with head lines, heart lines and fate lines when, during the middle of his readings, his neighbour's son Gopi, came running to his tree-side business and panted, 'Chachu (Uncle), Chachu! Go home immediately. Munna's Ma has been robbed at knife point and she is wailing outside your house crying that all her valuables have been stolen.' (Married women in the north are normally addressed as someone's mother, or, as so and so's wife.)

When he heard this, a shocked Ganga Prasad dropped his palm reading of Subash in mid-sentence. He hurriedly got up and lifted his dhoti up to his knees and without even wearing his chappals, began to run towards his home.

As he ran, the onlookers on the road as well as the regular crowd at the tea shop looked on in surprise. "Why is he running like that?" asked Karan the cobbler to Ghanshyam, looking up in surprise.

"It seems his house was robbed," answered Ganga Din who was lounging nearby.

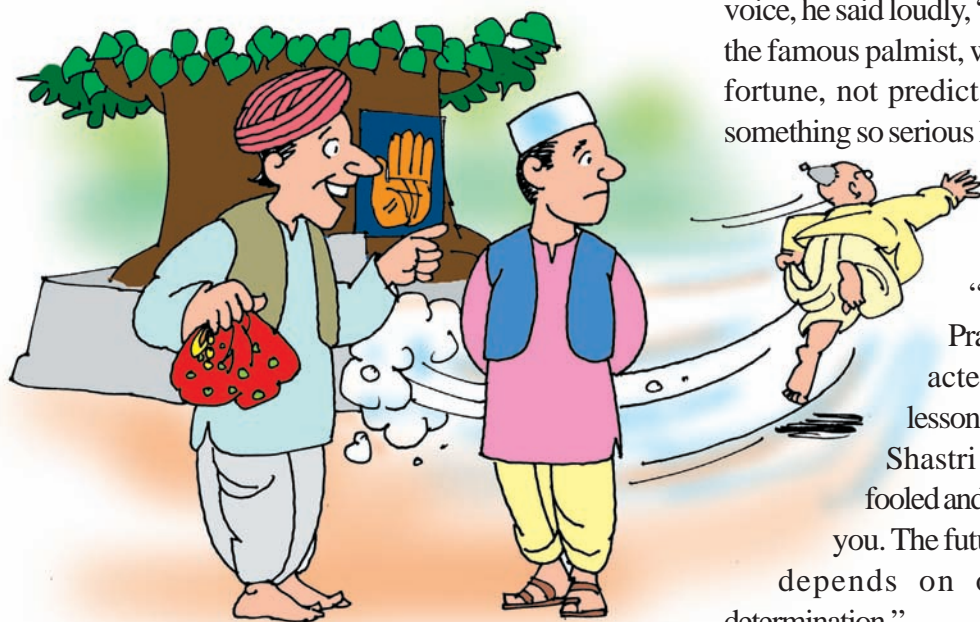
"But surely he must have known that this was about to happen!" said Shyamsunder, the village gossip.

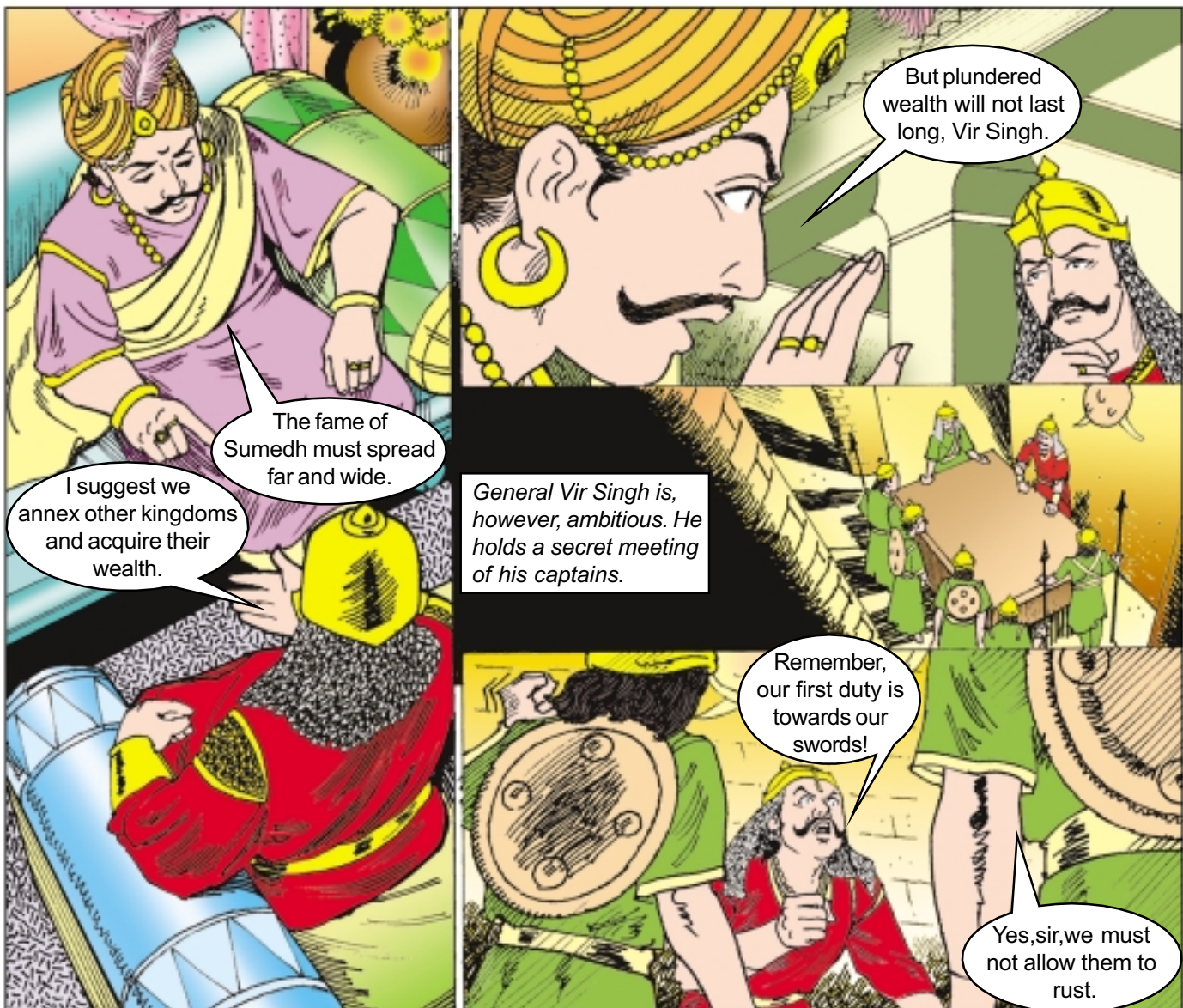
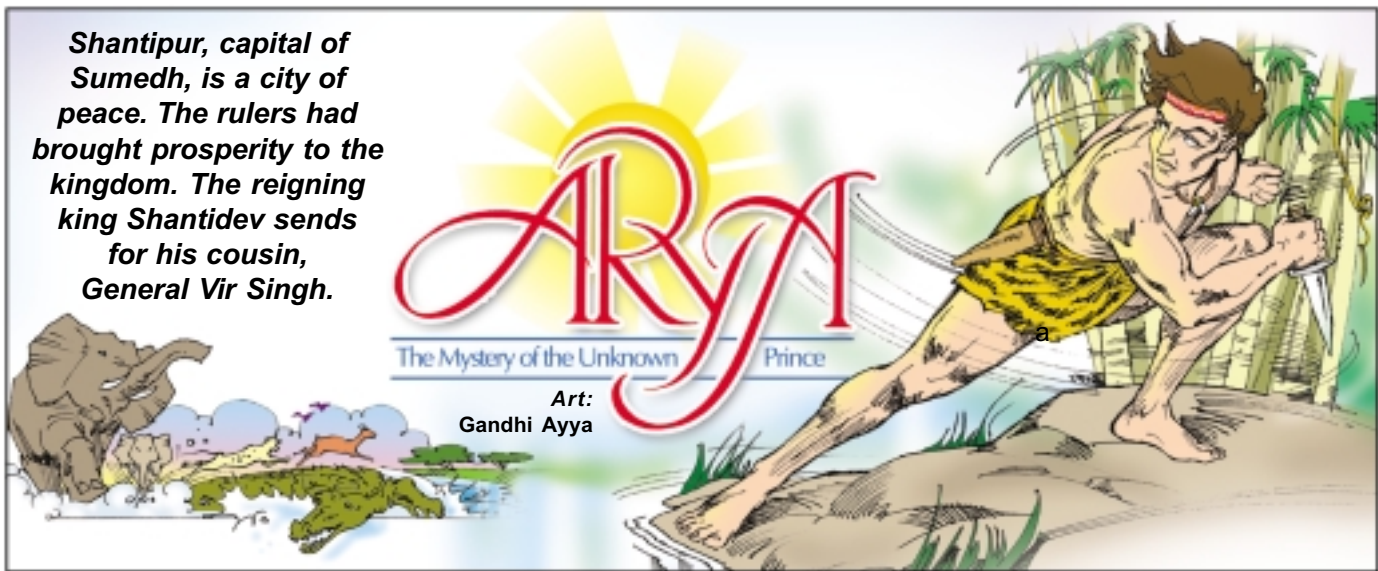
"What are you talking about? As if the thief would give him advance notice that he was going to be robbed today!" stated Milind Godbole.

"No," said Subash, the merchant from Lucknow who was really Kalia's cousin. With disgust and a sneer in his voice, he said loudly, "How come Ganga Prasad Shastri, the famous palmist, who could foretell everyone else's fortune, not predict his own future? And that, too, something so serious like a theft in his house?"

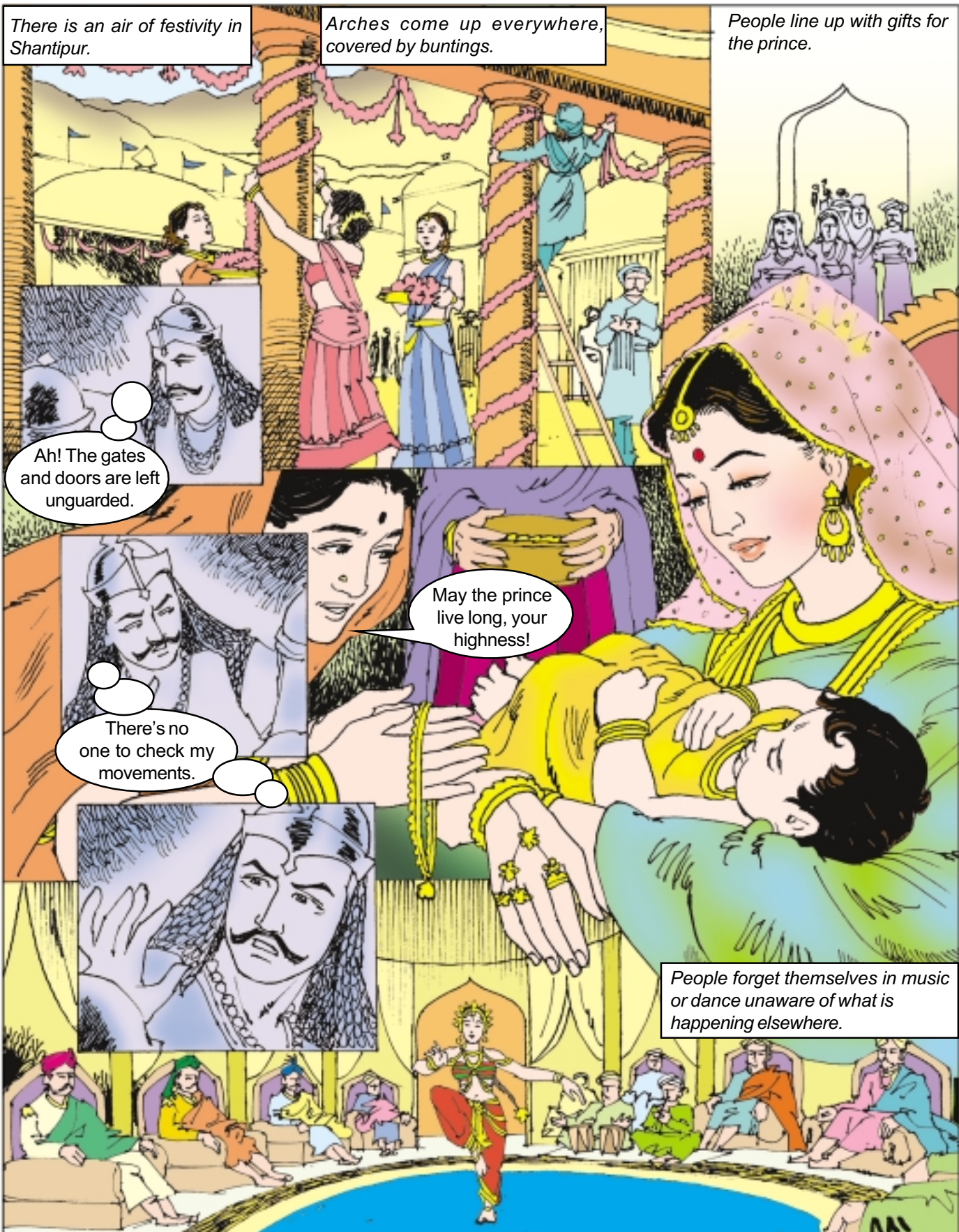
This shocked everyone around into silence. Then Kalia came forward and told the crowd, "Actually the valuables from Ganga Prasad's house are right here. We only acted out a robbery to teach him a lesson. I've nothing against Ganga Prasad Shastri earning a living, but do not get fooled and believe in everything someone tells you. The future is in your hands, it is true. But it depends on one's own hard work and determination."

- B. Sumangal











I'm tired, let me go and take a rest.

Suddenly, the king rushes into the queen's chambers.

What's the matter, my lord?

Ask the maids to leave!

Our lives are in danger, my queen. You must escape with our son, immediately. Take the secret passage!

Where do you want me to go, my lord?

To continue

# GRANDPA'S SECRETS

*(Ever found out what games your grandfathers played? Talk to them about the games they played when they were young. Write to us about these games. We want to know about these old games before everyone forgets them. This is important, so don't forget to write. We may have a surprise for you.)*

It was a hot day. Raju was feeling bored. His friends had all gone away to spend their holidays. There was nothing interesting on the TV. He sat on the verandah of his house, chin in his hands. Oh for something interesting to do!!

"Hey, Raju, why are you looking so dull?" asked his grandfather, coming in from a walk.

"I've nothing interesting to do, grandpa," moaned Raju. "What a waste of a holiday!"

"Come on, come on," said his grandfather. "We'll think of something to play."

"Play? But you're a grandfather," said Raju, "and grandfathers are old and don't play."

His grandfather burst out laughing. "I'll tell you a secret," he said. "A long time ago, I was a little boy like you. I used to play!"

"But did you have any toys and games in those days?" asked Raju.

His grandfather laughed again. "In those days, our toys grew on the trees or we picked them from the ground."

Raju looked surprised. "How could that be? You must be joking."

"No, Raju," said grandfather. "In those days we played with the seeds and sticks that grew on the trees. Sometimes, we used stones or shells that we picked up on the beach. We had many interesting games. Shall we play one together?"

"Yes," said Raju, his eyes shining. "This sounds like fun."

Grandfather and Raju picked a handful of seeds from a nearby tree. Then they sat down in a shady corner of the verandah.

"Now, Raju," said grandfather arranging the seeds in a heap. "Take a deep breath and blow these seeds."

Raju blew hard, and some of the seeds lay scattered.

"Now pick these seeds one by one without disturbing the others," said grandfather.

Raju began picking. Grandfather smiled as he watched.

"Oh! I disturbed this seed," cried Raju.

"Then it's my turn," said grandfather. "We take turns till all the seeds are picked up. Whoever has more seeds wins the game!"

They played for about half-an-hour. The silence was broken only by Raju's laughter. Grandfather let Raju win.

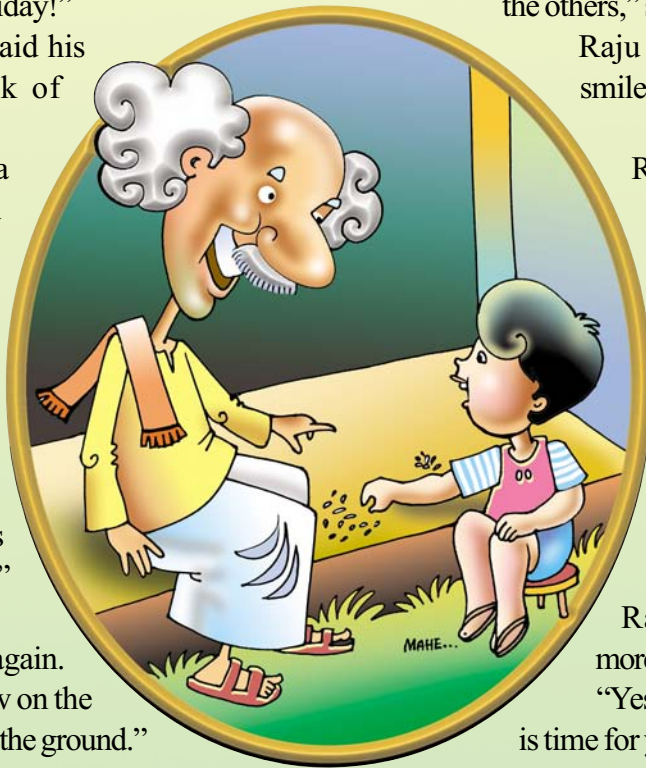
"This is a good game," said Raju. "Can you teach many more?"

"Yes," said grandfather, "but now it is time for your lunch. There are many old games in our country. Today people have forgotten some of them. But I remember all, and I will teach you."

Raju jumped up, his eyes shining. "Thank you grandfather, you're the best!"

Grandfather watched Raju run inside shouting to his mother. He smiled. The time had come to remember the old games. He would enjoy teaching Raju.

**- Vinita Sidhartha**



# FUN TIMES



1

2

1. Cinderella is taking a joyride on a pumpkin chariot. Some animals wish to take a peek at her. Can you identify them all?

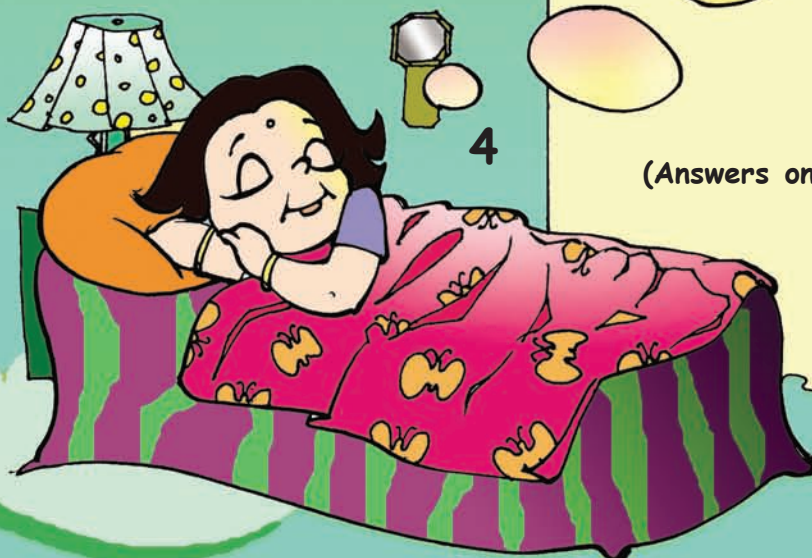
2. Munnie is having a swinging time in the mirror. But there are eight differences between the two pictures. How many can you spot?

3. Munnie, the sleeping beauty, dreams of being a little mermaid. Let's add colour to make her dream come true.

4. Munnie is having a second dream. Rinku Rat is wondering what is happening in it. Help her find the way to the dream.



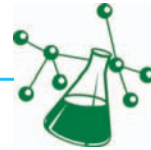
3



4

(Answers on page 64)

Rajesh



If kelp is a rich source of Vitamin C, I can eat more ice-cream, as they contain kelp. Great, isn't it?

## Kelp

Kelp is a very large brown seaweed. It is a plant classified under the division *Phaeophyta* and belongs to the group that has no true roots, stems or leaves. Kelp, however, has chlorophyll. The brown pigment of the cells almost hides the green colour. They have internal cells, like vascular tissue, and a long stalk that is held to the bottom of the ocean by holdfast cells.

Kelp usually grows along the shorelines of temperate regions. They thrive on rocky seabeds away from the shoreline.



Kelp removes great quantities of iodine and potassium from the sea. A gel-like substance, called algin, is made from kelp. This algin is used in dairy products, polish, glue, toothpaste, and in medicines as well. Kelp is also eaten as food. It is used in salads and in making candies. Kelp is a rich source of Vitamic C and many people take kelp pills.

## Kinesthetic sense

What is the automatic feeling that tells a person how much effort they must put to move or lift an object, called? Common sense? No! It is actually called kinesthetic sense, or more commonly, muscle sense.

It is kinesthetic sense that tells a person the position of each part of the body. For example, to walk, a person need not look at the legs to make a move. The brain sends a message through tiny sensory nerves to the muscle tissue or tendons of a particular part of the body required to move. The message transmitted through nerve impulses makes the body move, walk or lift or do any number of things. This kinesthetic sense also helps a person to control his movements or to sustain them.



Why can't I recall what I have read when I am telling my eye to read and my brain to remember?

That's because you lack common sense and not kinesthetic sense!



## Koala

The Koala is not really a bear, though it looks like one. It is a marsupial or animal that carries its young in a pouch. Koalas are territorial animals and found only in Australia. Its scientific name is *Phascolarctos cinereus*.

Koalas are tree-dwelling and herbivorous animals. Their staple diet is the leaves of the eucalyptus tree, as they are low in nutrition and very fibrous. The metabolic rate of the koala is very slow. This allows it to store food for a longer duration. The low metabolic rate helps the koalas lead a restful life, sleeping for 18-20 hours a day.

The koala is nearly 0.6 m long with a heavy body, large ears, and short snout. They have no tails. Their fore and hind limbs are of the same length. They have long sharp claws which they use for climbing trees and swinging between branches. Their body is covered with a woolly fur that protects them from extreme climates. The fur varies from a light grey to brown in colour, and it also acts as a raincoat during the rainy season. An adult koala may weigh anything between 6 and 14 kg.

Koalas have an extremely sensitive nose. It helps them differentiate the various types of leaves as well as identify the territory and scent warnings left on the trees by other koalas.

A newborn koala is called a Joey which is the same for the young of a kangaroo also. The babies are only 2 cm long and weigh less than 1 gm. The Joeys are blind at birth and remain in the pouch for the next seven or eight months. They develop ears, fur, and eyesight from about 22 to 30 weeks.

Koalas are believed to have existed some 25 million years ago. They were an important part of the aboriginal culture. Their numbers dwindled drastically due to hunting and cutting down of the eucalyptus trees, but today they are a protected species.

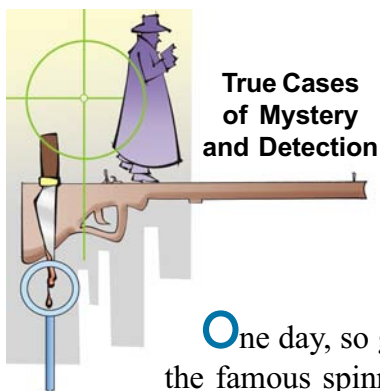
- Compiled by Vidhya Raj

## Activity

Given here are the names of some scientists, whose names begin with the letter 'K'. Identify them with the help of the clues.

1. A renowned Scottish physicist, he devised a temperature scale that is named after him: \_\_\_\_\_
2. A German mathematician and astronomer of the late Renaissance period, he discovered the laws of planetary motion: \_\_\_\_\_
3. He shared the Nobel Prize for Physics with W.E. Lamb in 1955. He determined the magnetic moment of electrons: \_\_\_\_\_
4. A famous German physician, he investigated the origin and treatment of Malaria and also discovered the germ that causes Tuberculosis: \_\_\_\_\_

Answers :  
1. William Thomson Kelvin  
2. Johannes Kepler  
3. Polycarp Kusch  
4. Robert Koch



## THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE MYSTERY-WRITER

One day, so goes the story, the famous spinner of tales of crime, mystery, and detection, Agatha Christie, clean disappeared from the face of the earth! As every reader of mystery stories knows, she was the creator of the popular detectives, Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple; she was also the author of the famous play, *The Mousetrap*, that is still playing on in England since 1952, breaking all records as the longest running stage play. This prolific writer, better known as the Queen of Crime, that chilly Friday night of December 3, 1926 mysteriously vanished from her home at Berkshire.

When last seen, she was reported to have been dressed in a grey knitted jacket, a greenish colour skirt, and a hat. The next morning, her two-seater car was discovered about a kilometre away from her home. The vehicle's front wheels were precariously hanging over a deep crevice. No one was inside the car, the brakes were off, but the ignition switch was on.

And Agatha Christie was nowhere to be found; she seemed to have vanished into thin air! No clues or evidence was discovered to ascertain her whereabouts. Had she been kidnapped? Was she murdered? Had she taken her own life? Detectives were pressed into service and the police began a massive investigation and a nationwide hunt for the missing novelist. Where had she so



mysteriously disappeared all of a sudden?

For eleven days the search continued without respite. Then, on December 14, the staff of a certain hotel in Harrogate town of Yorkshire, hundreds of kilometres from Agatha Christie's home, got the surprise of their life. They unwittingly found, in the course of their duty, a marked

resemblance between the photograph of the missing writer published in the newspapers and a guest named Theresa Neele, who had recently checked into their hotel and claimed to have come from South Africa.

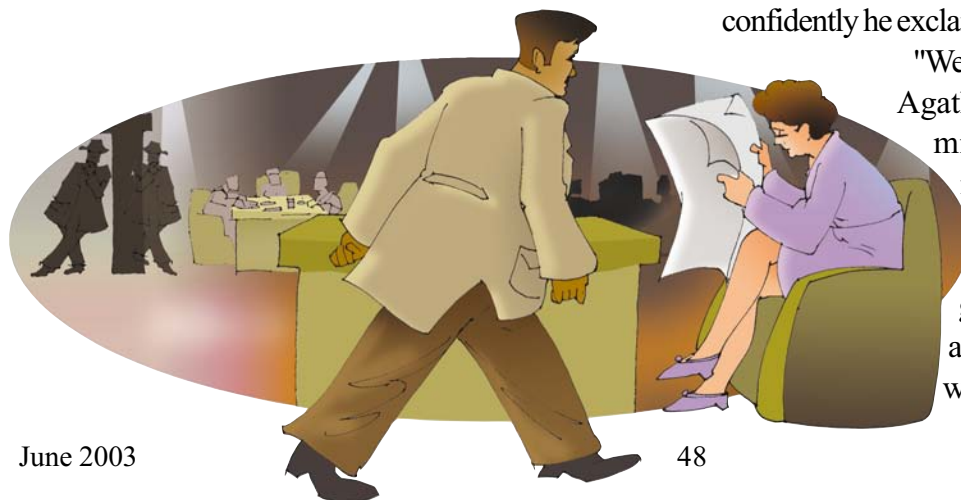
The investigating agencies were intimated without delay. The detectives and the police arrived in no time at the hotel, accompanied by the author's husband, Colonel Archibald Christie. They were led to the spacious dining hall.

There, in one corner sat the guest, Theresa Neele from South Africa, unaware of their anxious presence. Indeed, there was a marked similarity between her and the missing writer. Who then was she? Was she a twin sister of Agatha Christie? Why was this then kept a hidden secret for so long?

Colonel Christie slowly walked up to the lady in the chair engrossed in reading a newspaper, while the others stood some distance away with bated breath. He intently surveyed her from all angles and sides. Then, very confidently he exclaimed loud and clear:

"Well, well, she is indeed my lawful wife, Agatha Christie, and there can be no mistake about it. Look, she is now reading the report of her own disappearance!"

But alas, the young lady only gave a blank look. She was dazed and confused. She had no idea who she was or where she was!



However, Archibald Christie, who was certain that she was his wife, finally took her home.

Indeed, she was none other than Agatha Christie! But she always maintained that she had no idea and could provide no explanation how her car was found abandoned over the edge of a dangerous crevice. How did she come to be in a place hundreds of miles away from home, posing as someone else and from another continent? Why did she behave so strangely? Was she enacting a theme for her next mystery story?

Nor does she make any reference to this unusual

incident in her autobiography. But she does admit that the year 1926 was a traumatic one in her life. "As so often in life, when one thing goes wrong, everything goes wrong, too," she is said to have commented on this particular period of time.

Nevertheless, her disappearance and reappearance have remained an enigma! At least those who were investigating the case were happy that Agatha Christie was found again! But they were puzzled as to how this bizarre happening took place at all and why! We, too, are equally clueless to this day!

## Meet the... Bunlap tribals

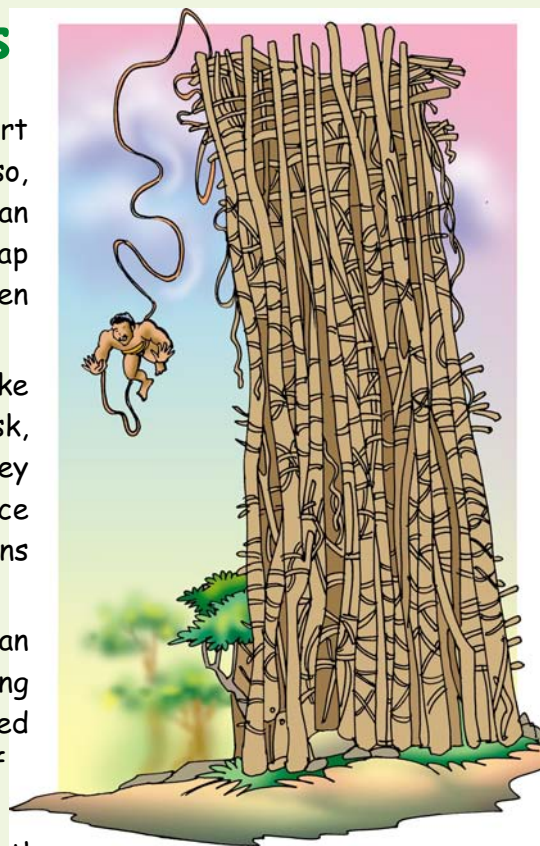
Have you ever watched the extraordinarily daring sport of bungee-jumping and wondered how it originated? If so, here is your answer. This thrilling activity has its origins in an annual ritual called 'land diving', practised by the Bunlap tribals of Pentecost Island in the Western Pacific, between Australia and Fiji.

This 1,500-year-old ritual is a test of raw courage. Unlike the Westerners who aped the concept and minimised the risk, jumpers here don't have elastic cords to break their fall. They employ no engineering studies, stress meters or G-force computations. They use no water, safety nets, or cushions below, just freshly turned earth on a slope.

Legend has it that the ritual originated with a woman who climbed a banyan tree to escape from her pursuing husband. She jumped down and was unhurt, as she had tied *lianas* (vines) to her ankles to break the fall. Unaware of this, he followed suit, only to crash to his death.

Land-diving is an elaborate ritual that takes place in the months of April-May. A huge tower, 12 feet square and 80 feet high, is built using logs and *lianas*. Each jumper selects his own vines and builds his own platform on the tower. While the novices' platforms are 20 to 30 feet high, those of experienced jumpers would go as high as even 70 feet. The ritual takes place with great fanfare, to the accompaniment of song and dance. The tower is demolished a week after the ceremony, and the logs used as firewood.

Surprisingly, the Bunlap land divers have a better safety record over centuries than the western bungee-jumpers. The lone accident happened in 1974, when a special off-season leap was arranged as an exhibition for the visiting Queen Elizabeth. A jumper's vines snapped, and he plunged to his death. Otherwise, the flexible nature of the tower and the *lianas* prevents serious mishaps.





**Dear eco friends,**

Did you know that green coconut shells from Kerala were used to make ice cream cups for use in the Barcelona Olympics in 1992? No plastic cups for ice cream! Coconut shells and coir have been traditionally used by rural people to light fires, too. And have you seen coconut shell handicrafts? No? Now, here's a chance for you to learn to make something useful and beautiful out of the brown shell of a coconut.

Love  
**KOPRA KUTTY**

## Shell pen stand

The brown coconut shell, when broken into two halves, is in the shape of a cup. You can let your creativity run wild and make many decorative and useful household articles with a used shell.

For example, here's how you can make a pen stand out of a coconut shell. This pen stand is biodegradable and does not pose any environmental hazard to our planet.

So try making it and go ahead and spread the idea among your friends.

**Things you will need:**

*Half a coconut shell (the half with the three eyes)*

*Sand paper*

*Hammer and a nail*

*Fabric colours*

Pick up a used coconut shell.

Smoothen its rough exterior with a piece of sand paper.

With a nail and hammer, dig out the three eyes on the shell. A word of caution - Take the assistance of elders while using the hammer.

Paint the shell brightly with fabric colours. After the base colour dries, you may paint creative designs on the shell.

Now you can place the pen stand on your desk.

Put your pen or pencil in the holes of the shell.





# CHANDAMAMA

*All you budding writers and artists*

*Thank you for sending in your writings and  
drawings for the special children's section*

## KALEIDOSCOPE

The July 2003 issue of *Chandamama* will feature the first selection from the hundreds of entries that have poured in since the announcement in April 2003. You may continue to send in your entries.

### Guidelines to be followed :

1. You can send in poems, stories, jokes, riddles, illustrations, drawings besides your views and ideas on subjects of interest to you.
2. All your contributions must be ORIGINAL. They must not be copies of already published material.
3. Your own effort will have its charm if it is un-aided by elders.
4. You may also send your colour photograph to appear along with your entry.

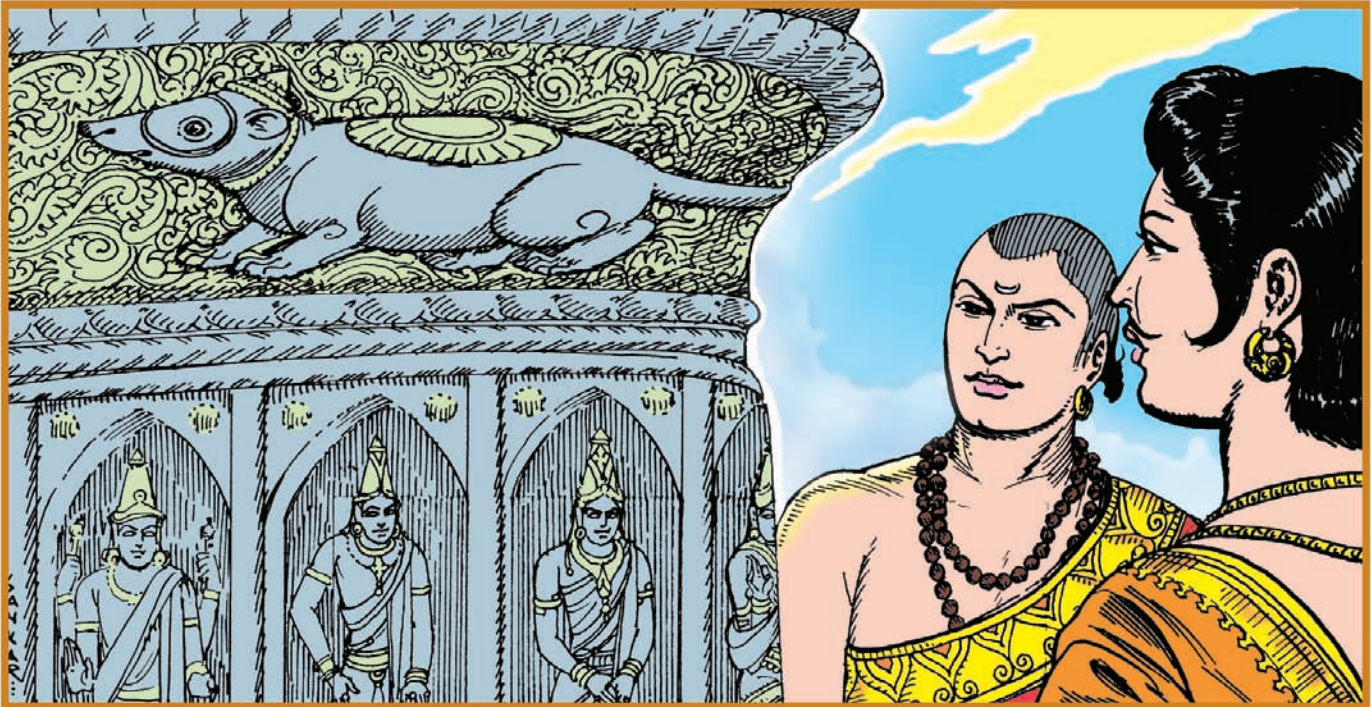
*Send your contributions with details of your name, age, class, parent's name, address with PIN code, and phone numbers to:*

**KALEIDOSCOPE**, The Editor, Chandamama (English),  
Chandamama India Limited, 82, Defence Officers' Colony,  
Ekkatuthangal, Chennai - 600 097.



# Story of Ganesa

## 18. The end of demon Ilval



**I**t was the Dwapara Yuga and Yudhishtira was getting ready to perform the Aswamedha yaga. Brother Arjuna, who was accompanying the yaga horse along with Dhaumya, the priest of the Pandavas, reached Vatapi where he was led to the magnificent statue of Vighneswara. He circumambulated the statue a number of times with great devotion.

Arjuna saw the figures of Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Siva, besides those of their consorts and the Divine Mother, sculpted on the sides of the huge statue. Arjuna could not take his eyes off the wonderful sculptures. He then turned to the priest and asked: "I wish to know more about this area known as Vatapi. Would you please tell me about its history?"

Dhaumya satiated the curiosity of Arjuna. This is what he told the Pandava prince:

The demon Ilval was scared of sage Agasthya and he ran away from Vatapi to the forests of the Vindhya mountains where he led a life in seclusion and anonymity. In course of time, he came to know that Vatapi had prospered and the sage had left Vatapi. The demon

changed his form before returning to Vatapi. He appeared among the people as a man of charity wishing to serve the people.

However, in the absence of sage Agasthya, evil got into the minds of the people and they became selfish which led to jealousy among the people and frequent quarrels. Many people were reduced to poverty. When Ilval saw this degradation among the people, he decided to take full advantage of the situation and employed all the strategies he could muster—including magic and witchcraft fight—to pose as a leader who had come to save them. In a short time he earned their admiration and gratitude.

Ilval now came to the conclusion that as long as the statue of Vighneswara remained in Vatapi, the people would not forget sage Agasthya and continue to worship the Lord. He wanted to remove the name of the Lord and the teachings of the sage from the minds of the people. He taught them witchcraft and magic; he incited them to take to evil ways.

He also went about removing the inscriptions left by

Agasthya all over the place and erected slabs containing his own instructions to the people, who now were provoked to fight against each other. The state of anarchy prompted those who survived to leave Vatapi in search of peaceful places. There was an exodus.

Ilval next wanted to destroy the statue of Vighneswara. By now he was joined by several demons who entered Vatapi incognito. They went to his help by devising ways to damage the statue. They dug pits all around the statue and filled them with materials that would trigger an explosion.

An explosion did take place but it was not at the hands of the demons. It was nothing but a miracle. The demons lost their lives; several wicked people were killed in the explosion which maimed Ilval. He lost one leg and one hand. He heard a voice from inside the statue: "Ilval, you will live long nursing your disability all through your old age! You deserve such a punishment." The voice was none other than by Lord Vighneswara. The few persons who survived the mysterious explosion changed their lives and soon Vatapi was once again a prosperous city.

As Dhaumya concluded his narration, Arjuna was surveying the area in front of him. When he turned around, he could not see the statue of Vighneswara. He was bewildered. "Arjuna, you need not be surprised," said Dhaumya. "After all, we knew the statue will disappear and your brother will erect a new statue."

Arjuna now sent word to Yudhishtira to reach Vatapi as early as possible. Accordingly, he and the other Pandava princes, Bheema, Nakula and Sahadeva, arrived in Vatapi. Yudhishtira sat facing the place from where the statue of Vighneswara had disappeared and prayed: "O Lord! You had blessed my brother by appearing before

him. Would you not give me the same privilege? I wish to install a statue of yours in this very spot."

As he sat there meditating on Vighneswara, Yudhishtira heard a voice: "O Yudhishtira! Sivakarma, who is the sculptor of gods, and Mayan, who is the sculptor of the asuras will together make a statue. You may install that statue. You will successfully perform the Ashwamedha yaga, and your suzerainty will prevail over this place."

Yudhishtira opened his eyes and saw a giant-sized image of the Lord. However, the next moment it disappeared. The next day two persons appeared in Vatapi. One of them was dark-skinned. Yudhishtira could easily recognise them. They were Sivakarma and Mayan. He prostrated before them. They tried to move a huge rock lying there. As it tilted to one side, they found a huge treasure of priceless jewels and precious stones beneath the rock. Evidently it was the ill-gotten treasure of the demon Ilval. In course of time, Yudhishtira utilised the wealth to develop the city of Vatapi.

The two sculptors began work on the statue and soon it was ready. Then, Sivakarma and Mayan constructed a temple complex around the statue. The whole place was transformed into a beautiful spot, and it attracted the

people of Vatapi and elsewhere. Soon after the work was over, the two sculptors disappeared from the scene.

Accompanied by his brothers and the yaga horse, Yudhishtira, came to Vatapi and offered oblations to Lord Vighneswara. He brought back the inscriptions of sage Agasthya exhorting the people to lead a good life and begin governance by themselves. Thus, Vatapi enjoyed a democratic form of government. Some time later Vatapi was renamed Agasthyanager.



# Caught on the Wrong Foot!

Sunita, Ranjan, and I run down the steps of the overbridge that leads to the platform of the railway station and walk on. I shuffle the satchel holders that slip down under the pull of gravity. This is an exercise that we students often do. We do that, instinctively, a number of times, every day. It is just a reflex action. So, I am in step with Sunita and Ranjan when we make a beeline to the compartment. We are on our way to school. Every day, we take the 8.10 local passenger at Egmore for Tambaram. Our school is within walking distance to Guindy station.

I said walking distance. But we rarely ever walk that distance. We almost race, covering the distance in about five minutes. Know why? At Guindy, speed is all that matters. Do you know that the best of horses vie with each other for the first place on the Guindy racecourse? Here, we are told, men can become millionaires overnight.

Is money there for the picking on the racecourse? If so, why can't all the poor people be told about it? They can do with some money!

We push our way into the compartment. Sunita trips on a steel band on the floor of the compartment. It had freed itself from a couple of rivets that held it down and lifted its free end up. Sunita tumbles, throws her arms around to arrest the invisible hand of gravity that wants to bring her down, miraculously manages to regain her balance, and sighs, "That was a near thing."

"That would have brought you from perpendicularity to horizontality in a second," I joke, using the new words that I had learnt from the teacher only yesterday.

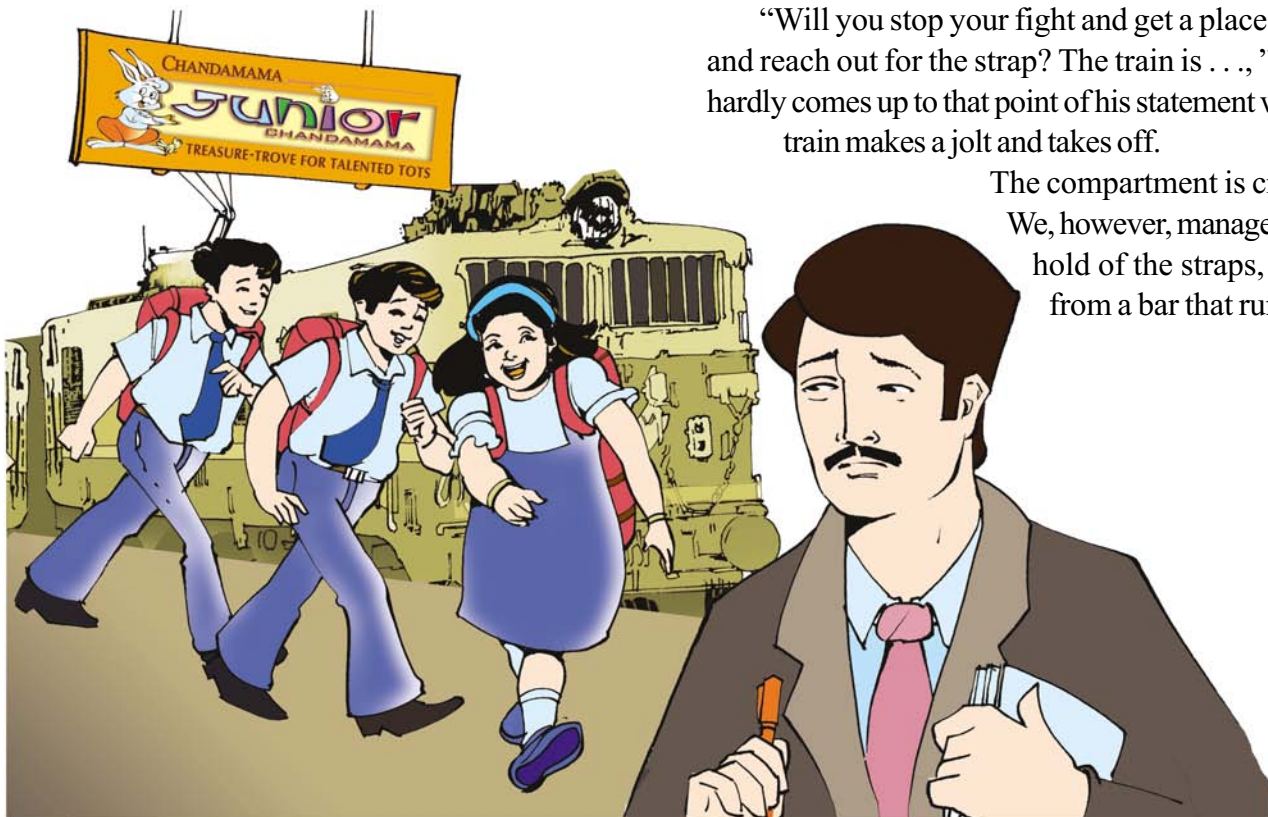
"Big words go ill with you, Ranga," Sunita snaps.

"Feeling jealous?" I give her a stern stare.

"Oh, Ranga . . ." Sunita shows how frustrated she is.

"Will you stop your fight and get a place to stand and reach out for the strap? The train is . . .," Ranjan hardly comes up to that point of his statement when the train makes a jolt and takes off.

The compartment is crowded. We, however, manage to catch hold of the straps, looping from a bar that runs along



the length of the compartment, clutch them, look upon them as the stabilizers that we need.

"Will it work?" I ask, in a conspiratorial tone, once the train glides along smoothly.

"Did you say something?" Ranjan asks, but his voice is drowned by an express train that runs on the adjoining track, drilling nails of deafening notes into the air with its sharp whistle.

"Are you turning deaf?" I raise my voice.

"Stone deaf is the word," Sunita rubs it in.

"You dullard, you still haven't gained the decibel power that beats the sound notes of the engine. Get it?" Ranjan scowls.

"Tell me, Ranjan, will it work? Will we run into Hari Anna?" I ask as the train speeds towards Guindy.

"We will. He told me last night that he'll be on duty on this train," says Ranjan.

I feel someone is tapping me on the shoulders, lift my head, and spot our cousin, Hari Anna. He has recently been appointed a TTE in the railways.

"You! Hari Anna!" Our hopes have come true.

"Your ticket, please," he behaves as if he doesn't know us. He has a thick book with a few carbon sheets sticking out of it; and a ball-point pen which seems to be itching to run on the sheets of the book.

"I've a student pass. Somewhere here, in my satchel," I decide to humour him.

"Show me," Hari is gruff.

I let the holders of the satchel slip down my arms, till I could get it off my back. I open the flap and start running my hands through it.

Sensing that I will take time to find the pass, Hari now turns to Sunita and Ranjan.

"Our passes, too, are in his bag," the two reply without a moment's hesitation.

"Ah ha!" Hari fidgets on his feet.



I take time to search, pull out a book here, a notebook there, an instrument box coming in between, making my fingers grope around the bottom of the satchel.

"Hurry up, boy. I've to check other passengers' tickets, too," Hari is now impatient.

"I know, Hari Anna," I try to be polite.

"Address me as Sir. Remember, I'm on duty!" Hari growls.

I turn the bag inside out. My eyes have that I-am-in-deep-trouble look.

"So, you've no valid passes," Hari assumes.

"He has our passes, too," Sunita growls.

"He's a nincompoop. He never knows where he puts things. He is a bird brain," Ranjan snipes.

"Say that again," I spit fire at him.

"You ... have ... a ..." Ranjan pauses after each word.

I go livid with rage.

Hari collars us.

"No fights here! You've no tickets. So, I off-load you at Guindy. Maybe, you shall count bars," Hari seems to gain malicious delight at the gloomy prospects we three have.

"All because of you," Sunita turns red with rage.

"All because of you," Ranjan repeats her words.

"Can't you be original ever? Have you to be a copycat every time?" I take a dig at him.

He raises his clenched fist. Sunita checks him in time. So I escape a fairly hard blow.

"Copycats do not even know how to deliver a punch," I am in no mood to let him be.

"I hold the punch line," Hari stays put.

"Please, Sir. We have valid passes," I beg.

"All right, then produce them," Hari grunts.

"They're somewhere here, Sir. In my bag," I give him a pleading glance.

"Till you produce them, I won't let you go," Hari is firm.

"Sir, spare us, this time," I almost break down into sobs. They are false tears, but I give them a touch of genuineness.

"I'm never moved by tears," Hari tells me not to waste my energy.

That is when the train draws to a stop at Guindy.

Hari gets down first. He waits for me to alight. Close behind come Sunita and Ranjan.

"Follow me. No tricks," Hari leads us to a railway policeman.

"You mean, Hari Anna, you'll book us, your cousins, for travelling without tickets?" Sunita shows utter surprise.

"I'm going to give you a treat that you'll never forget," every word of Hari drips with sarcasm.

"Please, Sir. Have mercy!" Sunita implores in a voice that oozes irresistible charm.

"Nothing moves me, girl. So, better don't try your tricks on me," Hari herds us and presents us before the policeman.

"These three imps have no valid travel passes or tickets," Hari tells the cop.

"Ah ha!" The cop, a muscular man, six feet tall, with a moustache that seems to remind one of the bandit Veerappan, examines us from head to foot.

"But we do have valid passes, Sir," I tell him.

"Telling lies to a policeman! Know the penalty?" his moustache starts to quiver.

"But we *are* telling the truth. Nothing but the truth, so God help us," Sunita supports me.

"Leave God out. He has other tasks to perform," the cop lets a smile touch his lips. He then purses his lips and rolls his big eyes, while bellowing, at the top of his voice, "I think you are bluffing. If you have passes, show them or . . ." he whirls the cane around and give us a real fright.

"They must be in my bag. Just a minute! Maybe, I gave them to Sunita for safekeeping. Now I remember. I did that. Sunita, check your satchel, you're a

good girl," I turn to her. That is the signal for her. She puts her hand into the bag, pulls out the instrument box, and, lo presto! the passes are there.

Hari's eyes bulge out in sheer shock. The cop is taken aback. That's just for a second. Then his eyes gain a slightly amused look, while Hari looks totally at a loss for words.

"You naughty children!" Hari finally explodes angrily. "I shall report this to your mother tonight."

"You won't, Hari Anna. You are our cousin, aren't you? And we're children, after all. Children sometimes forget. Sometimes even feign poor memory, as we did just now. We are sorry, Hari Anna. It was all in fun. Today, of all days, one can pull fast ones on others and at the same time get away," Sunita, Ranjan and I alternately complete the conversation.

"You mean . . ." Hari's lower lip drops.

"Yes, Hari Anna! Today is the first of April. Today we decided, when we set out for school, to have fun fooling . . ."

Hari scurries off, as if we are the plague itself, while the cop shapes his moustache with his fingertips and laughs loudly, saying, "There goes an April Fool!"

Sunita, Ranjan and I move out, race along at top speed toward the school, happy that our plan, hatched in advance to fool Hari, had worked so well.

**- R.K. Murthi**



# PUZZLE DAZZLE

## Children's day out at the zoo

Rahul, Shyam, Rita, Anju, and Tina are cousins. It is vacation time and they decide to visit the zoo one day. They had to stand in a queue to see their favourite animal, like the chimpanzee. While they waited each child received a balloon as a compliment. Each balloon had a different design. One of the designs was of the rainbow.

With the help of the clues given below find out the order in which each one of them stood, their favourite animal, and the design of the balloon each received.

### Clues:

1. The girl whose favourite animal is tiger stood third in line. Her balloon had neither hearts or stripes in it. She was not Tina.
2. Rahul was standing behind a boy. He was not fifth in the line.
3. The tiger and the zebra are not Anju's favourite animals.
4. Neither Anju's nor Tina's balloon was with either hearts or stripes. The balloon with stripes wasn't Shyam's.
5. The favourite animal of the person fourth in line is zebra. This person did not receive the balloon with swirls.
6. The one who received the balloon with polka dots likes lions most.
7. Giraffe isn't Rahul's favourite animal.



(Answers on page 64)

### Ageless age

**Given here are words that have an 'age' in them. Identify them with the help of the clues given. Happy spotting!**

The subject or terms of a bet: \_ A G E \_

The line of descendants of a particular ancestor: \_ \_ \_ \_ A G E

A list or plan of things to be done: A G E \_ \_ \_

The platform on which actors perform: \_ \_ A G E

- By Vidhya Raj

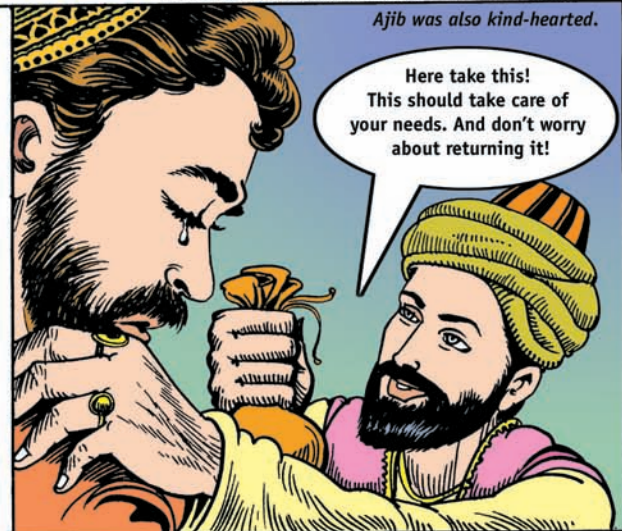
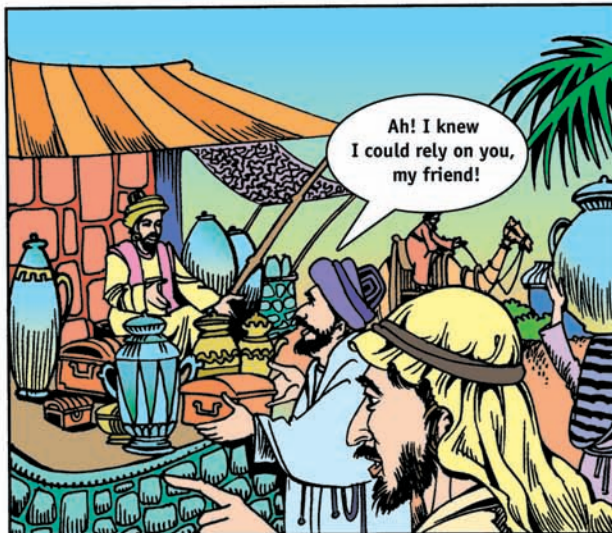
# The Arabian Nights : The envious and the gracious



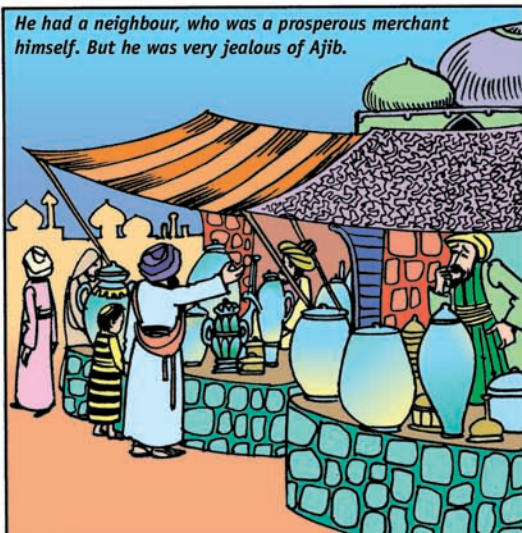
Ajib was a prosperous young merchant in a small town in far away Arabia. He was a popular man because he was honest and straightforward in his dealings.



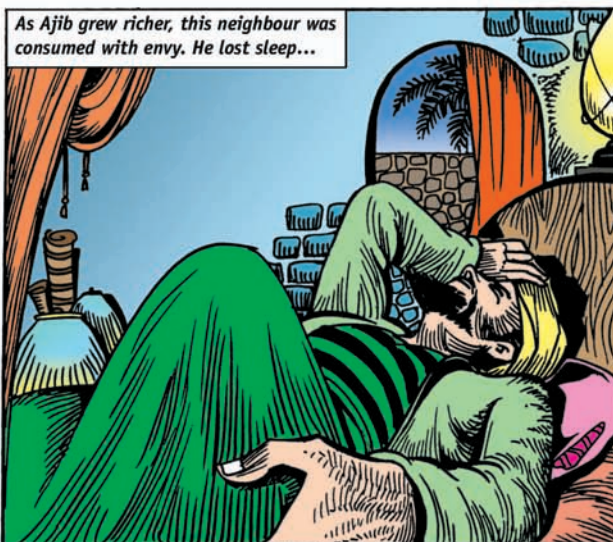
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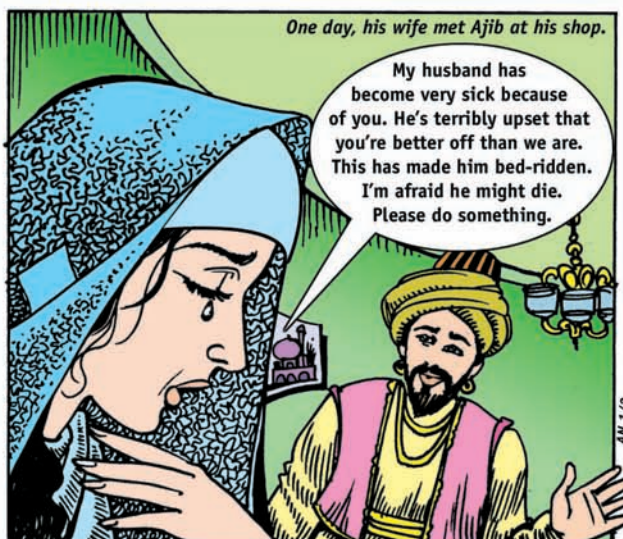
He had a neighbour, who was a prosperous merchant himself. But he was very jealous of Ajib.



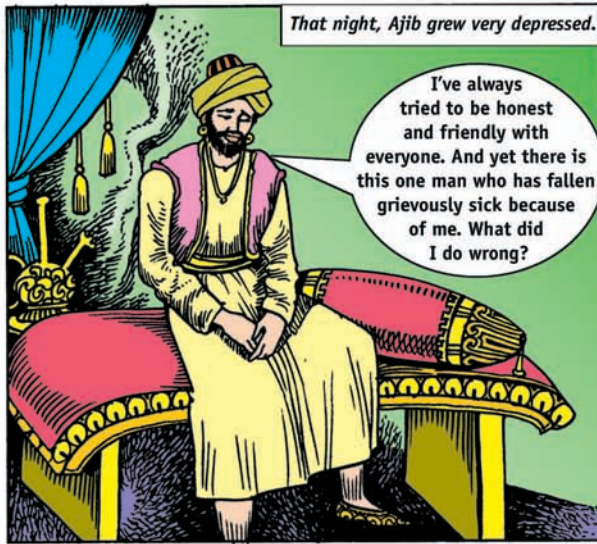
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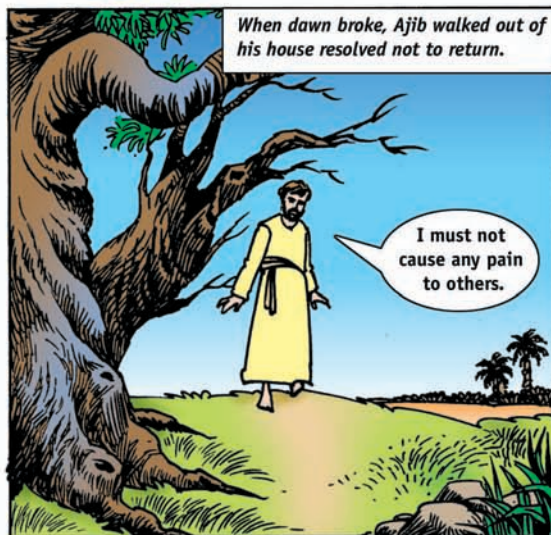
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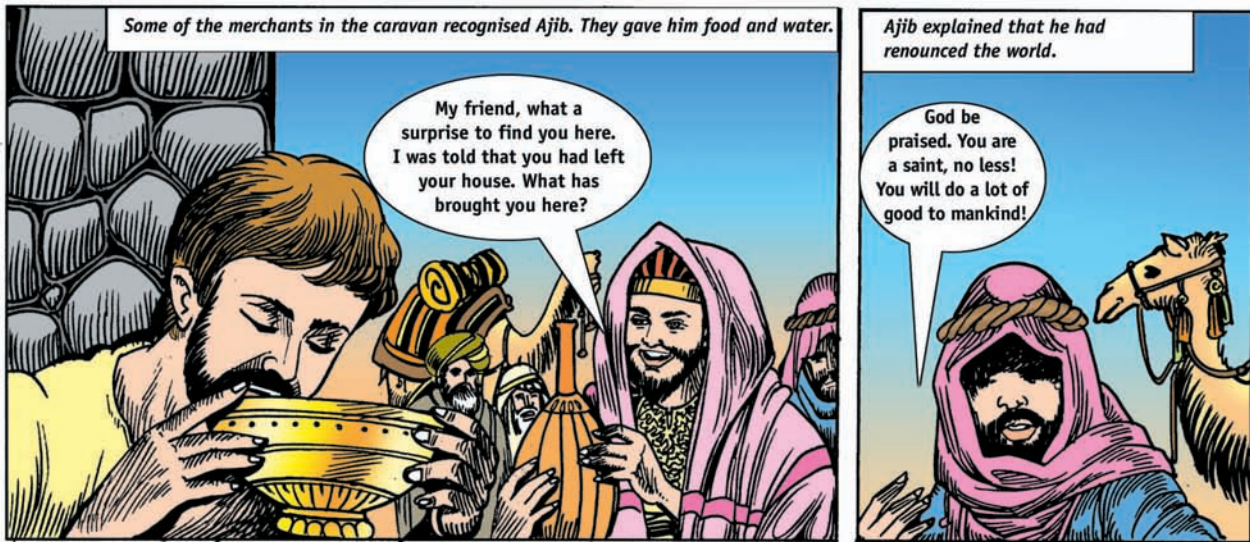
# The Arabian Nights : The envious and the gracious



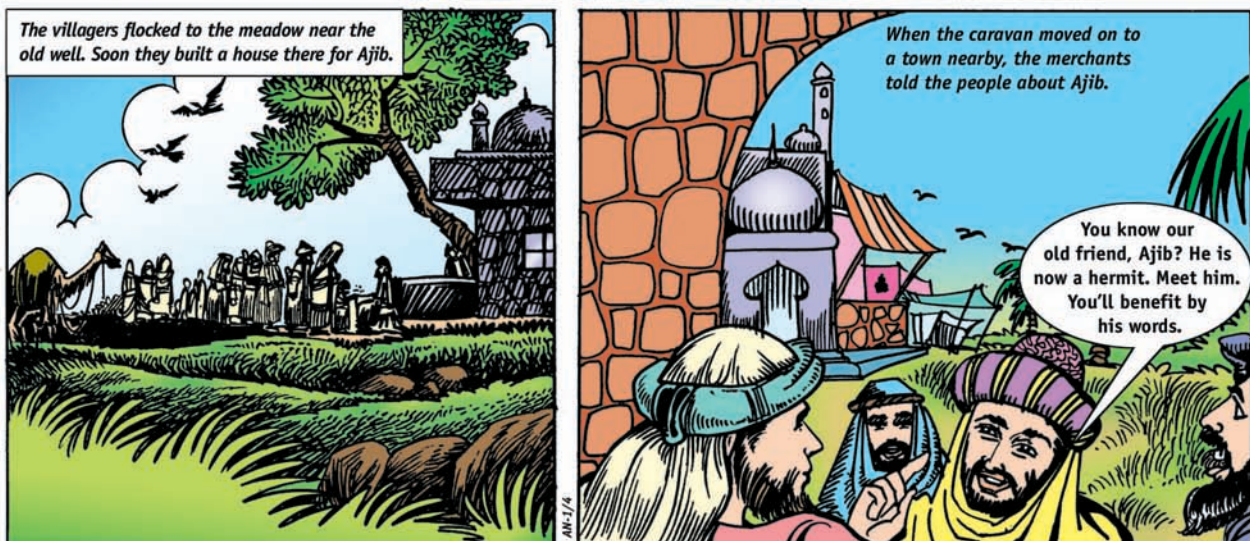
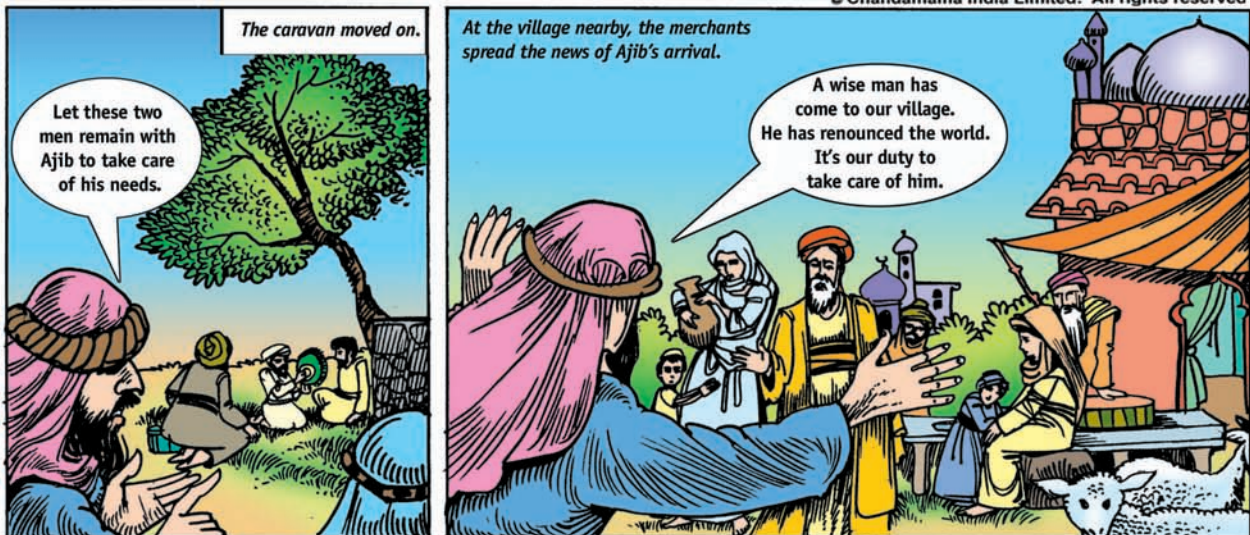
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# The Arabian Nights : The envious and the gracious



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What are bosons and how did S.N. Bose discover them? In what way did Meghnad Saha contribute to astrophysics and nuclear physics? Was he the man who founded the Institute of Nuclear Physics at Kolkata? Did a simple fact like the sea being blue really lead C.V. Raman to winning a Nobel Prize? All these questions and more are easily answered through the biography series of eminent scientists written by Dilip M. Salwi, a renowned science writer.

The Charitavali series from Rupa & Co (Delhi) is a series of biographies dedicated to legendary figures of India. The series covers a variety of people from freedom fighters to political thinkers, from pioneers of industry to film stars and sports persons.

Fascinating facts and anecdotes, life, achievement and character of these pioneers are woven intricately in a story-telling style that is easy to understand as well as inspire the reader.

Definitely worth buying or an ideal birthday gift at Rs 150, it is a collector's item in any home.

**ALL NEW!  
JUST FOR YOU !!**

**Here are some new products  
in the market that might  
interest you!**



## **Funskool's games package Innovative games for your mind**

Funskool India has launched some more game packages for children and they promise real info-tainment!

Funskool India have introduced the general knowledge quiz game with a new Indian flavour. New categories, new questions, and sporting a new look, it's the Trivial Pursuit™ – Family Edition! Suitable for age groups between 8 and 80 and playable by two to 36 players! Oof! That's a really family pack. At Rs 499 it's a real steal.

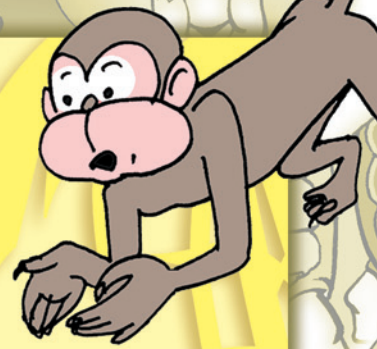
Blast off to outer space in the Astronaut's Adventure board game. It's great fun for kiddies of 4 and over and sure to keep them engaged on the trip in the red space shuttle. Priced at Rs 450 the attractive game is full of excitement!

The Rummikub Wordmagic is sure to keep the Spelling Bee champ engaged for a long long time. This exciting word building game involves enhancing the child's vocabulary, while ensuring that quality time is spent with the family. Yours for Rs 275.

More action, and this time it is cowboy action time on Funny Pony. The games develop concentration and mental skill of the child and packed with thrills and spills. Get this pony at Rs 199.



Good news  
for young  
bookworms!



**Hiya! What has hit the animal world?**

Listen hard and look keenly.

**D'you hear the jingle of the jungle?**

# JUNGLE JINGLES



Hurry,  
grab a copy  
from your  
nearest  
bookstore,  
now!

A set of five story books  
with the whackiest and most  
interesting collection of animal stories ever written.

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**CHANDAMAMA** and  
**Popular  
prakashan**

**NOW  
AVAILABLE**





★ *We know there are pygmies. But giants, did they ever exist?*

*- R. Ravindra Murthi, Tanjore*

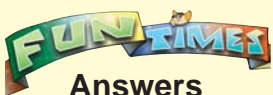
Don't be disappointed! Giants existed only in myths and folklore. Some of the European and Asian legends mention of giants who are believed to have existed long, long ago - maybe half-a-million years ago. However, there are no evidences - scientific or otherwise - of giants having actually existed. Some of the well-known circuses of yester years had artistes looking like giants. They were actually people suffering from abnormal physical conditions. There are very tall persons more than 7 feet high, but we don't call them giants. Some of the Sumo wrestlers in Japan also look like giants. They probably come under the term giantism - which is a physical condition.

## PUZZLE DAZZLE Answers

### Children's day out at the zoo

Order	Name	Animal	Design of balloon
1 <sup>st</sup>	Shyam	Giraffe	Hearts
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Rahul	Chimpanzee	Stripes
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Rita	Tiger	Swirls
4 <sup>th</sup>	Tina	Zebra	Rainbow
5 <sup>th</sup>	Anju	Lion	Polka dots

**Ageless age :** Wager, Lineage, Agenda, Stage



1. The hidden animals are:

2. The eight differences are Munnies's earring, Munnies's hair band, tree branch, wings of the bird on top, snake's tail, patches on the snake, missing cloud, number of feathers on bird at the bottom.



*Proud Indians read  
Junior Chandamama*

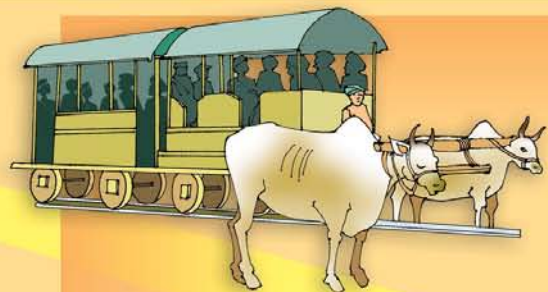
*Do you?*

**IN THIS JUNE ISSUE :**

We are celebrating the 50th year of a great event – rather the mountain of an event!



- Read all about the conquest of Mount Everest.
- The Dilwara temples at Mount Abu are dedicated to the Jain tirthankaras and Mahavira. Who was Mahavira? Read the story of Mahavira.



- Did you know? In this day of the metro rail, the Indian Railways once used bullocks to pull trains?

- Guess the Dress quiz. Identify the people of different Indian States from the dress they wear.



**44 fun and fact-filled pages of info-tainment on India and its people.**

Not just information, there's fun activities, brain teasers, colouring fun, riddles, jokes and much much more. . .

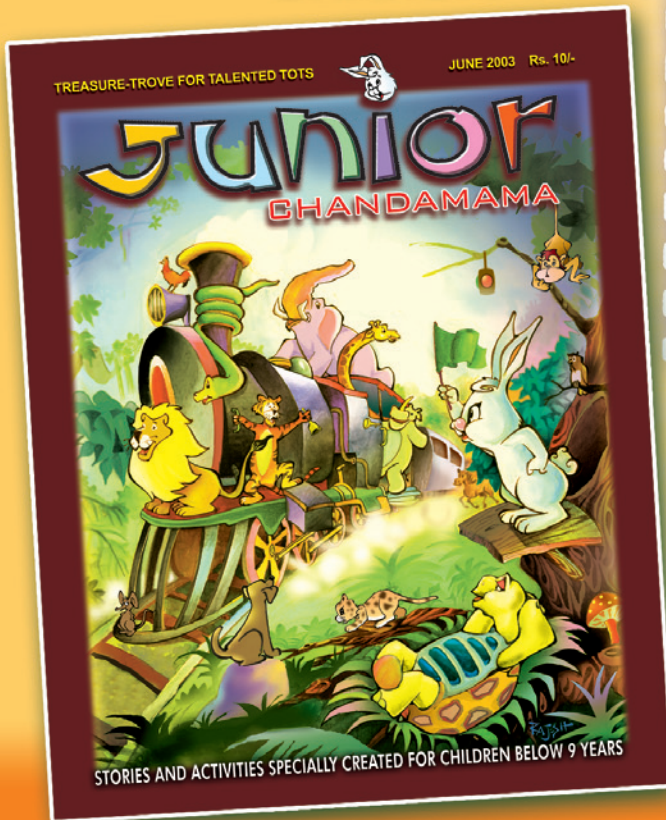
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NOW!**

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**Come to Junior Chandamama for loads of puzzles and games.**



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**Offer closes on June 30, 2003.**

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YOUR CHILD'S IMAGINATION**

**ISSUE AFTER ISSUE, MONTH AFTER MONTH**

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Please enrol me as a subscriber of Junior Chandamama. I give below the required particulars:

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I am remitting the amount of Rs.100/- (Discounted rate - till June 30, 2003) for 12 issues by Money Order/Demand Draft/Cheque No ..... on ..... Bank ..... branch drawn in favour of Chandamama India Ltd., encashable at Chennai (outstation cheque to include Rs.25/- towards Bank Commission).

Place : .....

Date : .....

Signature



*Click  
a caption*

## PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

*Can you write a caption  
in a few words,  
to suit these pictures related  
to each other?*

You may write it on a post card and mail it to:

**Photo Caption Contest**  
**CHANDAMAMA**  
(at the address given below)

to reach us before the 20th of the current month.  
A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry  
which will be published in the issue after the next.



*Winning  
Entry*

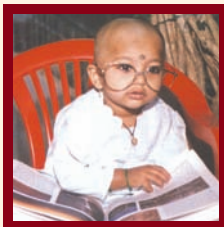
**"Smile please"**  
**"Silence please"**

*Congratulations!*

**The Prize for the  
April 2003  
contest goes to**

**KEVIN N. BHOI**

13, Bhagvati Park  
Behind Vaibhav Cinema  
Bakrol - 388 315.  
Dt. Anand  
Maharashtra

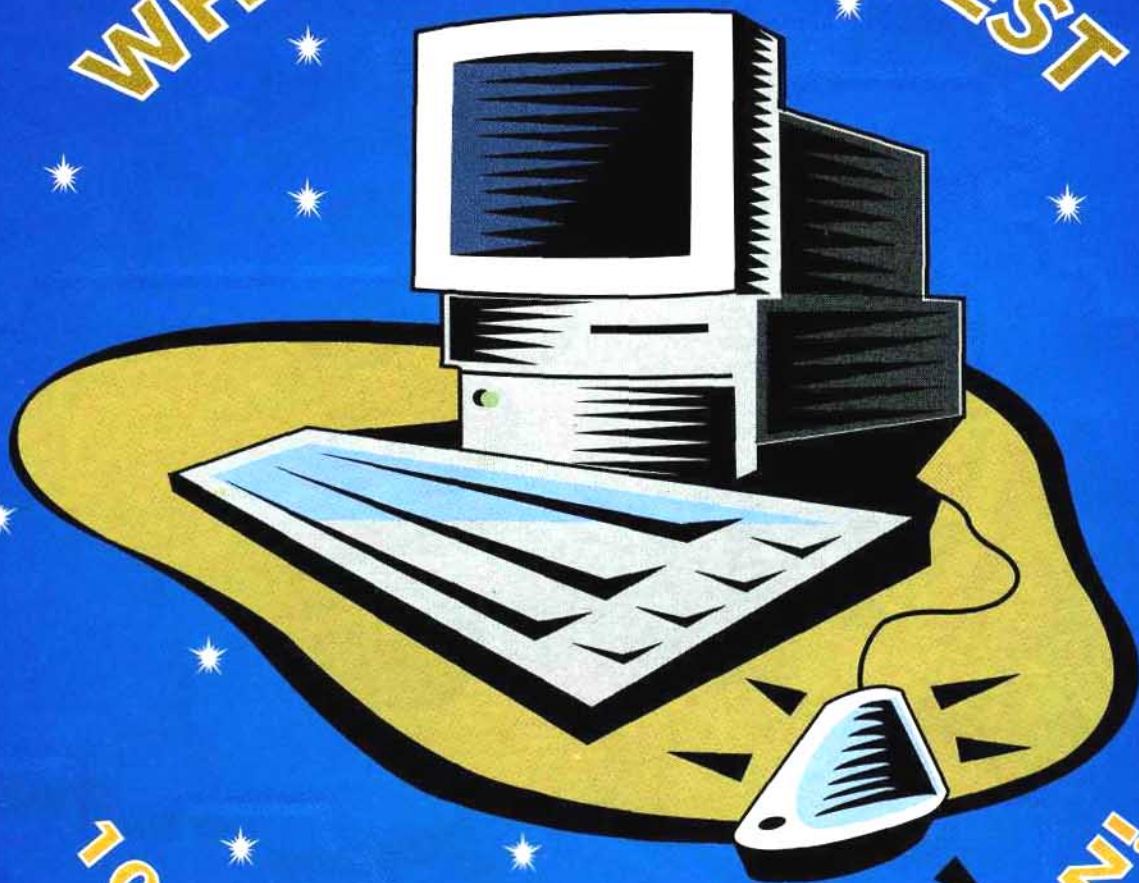


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# Melters

*Butterscotch Candy*

*The taste  
that melts  
everything  
away!*

